

SERMONS

ON SEVERAL
Occasions and Subjects,
In Three Volumes.

By the Reverend
Dr. RICHARD LUCAS,
Late Prebendary of *Westminster*.

The FIRST Volume contains Fifteen Sermons on Death and Judgment, and a Future State.

The SECOND, Sixteen Sermons on the Greatness and Certainty of a Christian's Reward. The Deceitfulness of Sin. The Folly of Infidelity. Of Trust in God. The Nature and Obligation of Oaths. The Duty of Ministers. Of Justice and Charity, &c.

The THIRD, Thirteen Sermons on Repentance; The Severity and the Goodness of God. To which is added, A Discourse against Despair.

All Publish'd from the Originals,
By his Son RICHARD LUCAS, M.A.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN WYAT, at the
Rose in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1722.

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By the Reverend

DR. RICHARD LUCAS

Late Professor of Mathematics

The FIRST VOLUME contains Sermons
more on Death, Judgment, Hell, and
the State of the Soul after Death.

The SECOND VOLUME contains Sermons
on the Christian's Duty and
the Duties of the Christian in
the World, of Family and Civil
Life, of Study, of Industry, of
Justice and Charity.

The THIRD VOLUME contains Sermons
on the Christian's Duty and the
Duties of the Christian in the
World, which is added to the
former.

As printed from the Original
Manuscript in the Year 1711.

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Printed by J. WATTS, at the
Sign of the Crown in St. Pauls Church-yard.



FIFTEEN
SERMONS

ON

Death and Judgment,

AND A

Future State.

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V O L. I.

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Rose in St. Paul's-Church-Yard, 1722.

FIFTEEN
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ON

Death and Judgment

AND A

Future State.



By Richard Lucas

DE RICHARD LUCAS

Late Prebendary of Wyke

Revised from the Originals

By JOSEPH RICHARD LUCAS, M.A.

VOL. I.

The Second Edition.

LONDON

Printed for JOHN WATTS, at the
Rose in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1737.



TO

Whitelocke Bulstrode, Esq;

S I R,



S. GRATITUDE is what, of all other Virtues, I declare my self most Ambitious of making part of my Character;

because it comprises in it my Duty to my G O D, my Country, my Prince, and my Friend: So I could not be long in doubt to whom I should make this first Publick Pro-

The Dedication.

feſſion of my Higheſt EſTEEM and REſPECT. The Favours You have laid upon me, by being not only pleas'd to own ſome Kindneſs for me, but by giving Proofs of it, as Opportunity offer'd, are ſuch as claim the ampleſt ACKNOWLEDGMENTS from me.

Neither could I conceive that an Address of this nature would be altogether unacceptable to you, as it contains a Teſtimony of the Sincerity of your Friendſhip, in your having vouchsaf'd Marks of *that* to the SON, which you contracted ſo early with the FATHER. *True and Laſting FRIENDSHIP* is too *Divine* a Thing to be found often on Earth; and therefore has always render'd the Names of thoſe between whom it has been obſerv'd, Memorable and Famous to Poſterity. *Scipio's* Great Name has not reap'd more Glory from the Conqueſt of *Africk*, than it has from

The Dedication.

from his Friendship for *Laelius*: Nor shall the Constancy he shew'd in the one, cease to be celebrated in Story, sooner than the Bravery and Conduct he manifested in the other. And this is not more a *Virtue* in Men of their Quality, than it is in those of more private Fortunes; tho' it happens to be more Conspicuous in them, by having the good Fortune only to be set to View in a more Advatageous Light.

I shall not now speak of Your Fidelity and Loyalty to our Most Gracious SOVEREIGN: Your Strictness in and Zeal for our Pure and Reformed RELIGION; and consequently Your Detestation of those Black and Hellish Practices, that are engag'd in by too many, who would seem Professors of it, in Favour of a *Popish Pretender*.

I shall not now either insist upon Your Ability and Dexterity in Dis-

The Dedication.

patch of Business; or yet upon Your almost Peculiar Happiness of an easie and familiar Way of delivering the Greatest Thoughts upon the most Important Subjects, in Your common Discourse, which renders Your Conversation so highly Agreeable, as well as Improving, to all those who have a true Taste of what is Manly and Rational.

I will not, I say, enlarge upon these, however justly I might, or any other of those Good Qualities which are Deservedly attributed to You, by all such as have the Happiness to be admitted into the Number of your Acquaintance; because I would be very loth, that the same Page which has been Honour'd with the sacred Name of FRIENDSHIP, should, though with ever so little Cause, stand suspected of the least Approach to FLATTERY; a Vice never to be enough hated

The Dedication.

hated in one's self, or despis'd in others.

What I here present you with, are some **SERMONS** Preach'd by Your dear Deceased Friend, upon the same Subject, at several Times; which I crave your Acceptance of, as of the greatest and most valuable Testimony I am capable of giving, how far I must ever look upon my self obliged to be,

S I R,

Your Most Humble

And most Obedient Servant,

Richard Lucas.

The Dedication

placed in one's self or helped in
others.

What I here present you with
are some sermons preached by
Your dear Deceased Friend, upon
the 1st and 2nd Subjects, at several Times;
with which I crave your Acceptance, as
one of the greatest and most valuable
Testimony I am capable of giving,
how far I must ever look upon my
self obliged to be.

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Your Most Humble

And most Obedient Servant

Richard L. Mead.



THE PREFACE.



ALL the Books and Papers of my Honour'd Father, coming, by his Last Will, into my Hands; I presently became sensible, as soon as I began to peruse the Writings I was by this means possess'd of, that the Treasure contain'd in them was too great to be reserv'd only for private Use: I thought it would shew me undeserving of 'em, if I did not the most Good I was capable of with 'em; and this End, I plainly saw, would be best attain'd by making them Publick.

*Besides, it might, not without Reason, have been imputed to me, as a
piece*

The PREFACE.

piece of Ingratitude to the Author, (whose Memory ought ever to be most dear to me) not to let the World see how faithfully and laboriously he had employed and exercis'd those Talents, which it pleas'd that God, who is the Author of every good and every perfect Gift, to intrust him with. This indeed has already, in some measure, appear'd to the World, from those Works of his which have been publish'd in his Life-time; but might be made much more evident still, from the many Volumes of Discourses that he has left behind him. These will remain for ever, at once, as a sure Testimony of the Vigilance and Industry wherewith he continu'd, notwithstanding his early Loss of Sight, to take care of the Flock committed to his Charge; and as a severe Reproof of many, that can plead no like Excuse in Justification of their shameful Remissness and Negligence. Neither did he content himself with this Publick Discharge of his Duty alone; for I have seen a Paper, design'd as private Instructions to himself, of those Enquiries it was proper to make into the Lives and Condition of all his Parishioners, with Names on the back-side, and Marks annex'd to 'em, such (I suppose) as serv'd to put him in mind of the particular Case of each of 'em. Thus it was

The P R E F A C E.

was that he perform'd the several Parts of his Function for a continued Course of above Thirty Years, struggling all the while with such Difficulties from his particular Circumstances, as would have been sufficient to have discourag'd any one from going on, that had not look'd forward to the Issue of his Labour, which he well knew would not be in vain in the Lord. For near three Years before his Death, Sickness almost altogether disabled him from being any farther publicly serviceable, as a Pastor of Christ's Church; during all which time, tho' his Infirmary was such as justly gave him Cause to live in continual Expectation of Death; yet he was never once heard to express any Uneasiness at the Thoughts of it, but seem'd entirely willing to leave the World, since he had dispatch'd the Work for which he was sent into it.

It is needless for me to enlarge farther upon the Author's Character, if I were of Ability for it; since the World has already done him that Justice, as generally to allow him the Reputation which was due to his Life and Writings; a Reputation great enough to serve for a sufficient Introduction into the Publick, to whatever can lay Claim to his Name. For this Reason it is, that I think it unnecessary to mention that of a
very

The PREFACE.

very Judicious and Learned Divine, who, at my Request, perus'd this Volume, and was pleas'd to give it his Approbation, before it was sent to the Press.

I am sensible but of two Things that may, with any colour of Reason, be objected against the following Sermons; one of which relates to me, as the Publisher of 'em, the other is what concerns the Author himself.

As to the first, the Method, I fear, which they here appear in, may displease some, by reason that the same Head (or at least not very different) comes often to be treated of in one and the same Volume; and if this had happen'd in an Author of a mean Invention, and a flat and barren Fancy, I will not deny but that it had deserv'd to have been look'd upon as a great Inconvenience, and must unavoidably have occasion'd Satiety in the Reader. But here, whatever the Subject be, the Reader will be sure to find the Matter differently handled, and the Thoughts new: Therefore, as the several Views of the same Edifice, are no less agreeable to the Eye, than so many new Prospects of wholly distinct Buildings, Why may not the Understanding be delighted with having the same Thing oft represented to it, when dress'd and set off by

THE PREFACE.

by such a Variety of Shades, as will be necessarily produced from its being placed, in so many new and different Lights? Besides, every Man has a peculiar Turn of Thought to himself, and will be no more equally wrought upon with the same way of Reasoning another is taken with, than different Palates will be gratified with one and the same kind of Diet.

As to what concerns the Author, if his Style do not in all Places appear sufficiently exact, it ought to be imputed to his Way of Delivery; for not confining himself to Words, he had the less Reason to be solicitous about the Niceness of that Language his Sermon was to be at first Penn'd in. But I believe this want of Accuracy in the Style, if yet such there be, will appear sufficiently aton'd for, by the Easiness and Perspicuity of every Part of it.

I will not therefore detain the Reader any longer from the Sermons themselves, than while I assure him, that let him be of what sort he will, he need not fear the being disappointed in his Expectations from them. He will meet with here Wit and Fancy for the Youthful; with Gravity and Soundness of Doctrine for the more Wise and Judicious; and lastly, for all faithful and zealous Professors of true Christi-

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Christianity, an unaffected Strain of Piety and Goodness throughout the Whole; which serves as well so peculiarly to distinguish all the Works of this Author, as to shew his own sublime and exalted Notions of Religion.



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the Hill, she caught him by the Feet; but
Gehazi came near to thrust her away.
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alone, for her Soul is vexed within her:
and the Lord hath hid it from me, and
hath not told me.*

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LUKE xvi. 22, 23.

And it came to pass that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom: the Rich Man also died, and was buried. And in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom. pag. 273

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LUKE xvi. 22, 23.

And it came to pass that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom: the Rich Man also died, and was buried. And in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom. pag. 297.

SER



SERMON I.

The Wisdom of Meditating on
our Latter End.

ECCLES. vii. 2.

It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting: For that is the End of all Men, and the Living will lay it to his Heart.



H A T the *House of Mourning* should be prefer'd before that of *Feasting*; that the Sad and Afflicted should be better Company than the Gay and Pleasant; that it should be better for us to share with our Friends in their Grief, than in their Mirth; and, in a word, that

B Medi-

VOL. I. Meditations on Death, are to be prefer'd before the Enjoyments of Life: These are such things as cannot but seem Paradoxes to the greater Part of Mankind; and yet these are the Thoughts of *Salomon*; great, not only on the Account of Divine Inspiration, but on the Account of his extraordinary Parts, and vast Experience too. These Notions therefore are, without doubt, right and true; and tho' the Practice of Mankind in general seems to clash with them, yet whoever considers the Nature of Things, will easily be convinc'd thereof. If indeed Death were an utter End of Life; if when Man did cease to live, he did cease to be, and would return to Being no more to all Eternity: Then, I confess, they would not seem to argue very much amiss, who should reason thus, *Let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we die*; Let us live, let us feast to Day, let us enjoy the World while we are in it, and then go out of it not repining and discontented, but glutt'd and satisfy'd with Good. This, I confess, upon the Supposal I just now made, would look like good Sense enough; for though it can never be deny'd, but that the Pleasure of the Mind be ever to be prefer'd before that of the Body, yet on this Supposal,

1 Cor. xv.
22.

posul, it would be hard to find what Ser. I.
Pleasure the Mind could have that must
not arise from, or terminate in, the Bo-
dy. But, on the other hand, if Life be
design'd by G O D, only as a State of
Trial; if Death be but the Beginning
of an eternal Life; if our Success in
that, depends on our Deportment in
this; if boundless and endless Misery
will be the Portion of the Fool and
Sinner, but endless and boundless Hap-
piness, *that* of the Wise and Virtuous;
then it will be easie for us to see, that
the Observations of *Solomon* are just and
true, and *that it is better to go to the
House of Mourning, &c.*

It is not my Business now to prove
that there is a G O D; that *Jesus* is the
Christ; that the Gospel is the Word of
G O D; and that there is a Judgment to
come; upon the Supposal of which it is
that *Solomon* builds his whole Discourse,
But know thou, that for all these Things Eccles. xi.
God will bring thee into Judgment. And 9.
again, *For God shall bring every Work*—xii. 14.
*into Judgment, with every secret Thing,
whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*
I may, I say, very reasonably presume,
that I may here take this for granted;
and doing so, it will not be difficult
for me to make good the Sense of the

VOL. I. Text. If we compare the Influence and Effects of Feasting and Mourning, we shall soon see why the *Preacher* sends us rather to the House of Mourning, than that of Feasting: Feasting makes us Merry, but Mourning Wise; Feasting gratifies the Appetite, but Mourning improves the Mind; the one diverts and passes the Time, the other makes us good Husbands of it; the one fixes us more and more on the World, and the Entertainments of it, the other checks all our inordinate Affections, purifies the Heart, and kindles in it the Desire of Spiritual and Heavenly Things, But I will insist no farther on this Comparison, but will endeavour to lay before you the Advantages we may reap from resorting to the House of Mourning, and then you will easily be able yourselves, to infer the Conclusion in my Text.

- I. then; The House of Mourning will move us to think on Death.
- II. It will furnish us with Matter proper for this Meditation.
- III. Meditation on Death, if serious and frequent, will make us wise.

And,

And, *1st*: The House of Mourning will occasion our thinking on Death. It would be of no small use to us, if we did accustom ourselves to think at all; if we could bring our Minds to a wise and serious Frame; if we did reflect, inquire, and consider the Nature of Things, the Tendency of Actions, and the various Events of Life. I perswade my self that most Men perish for want of Thinking; and to make Men Wise and Good, would be an easy Task, if we could perswade them to Consider. But of all the Subjects that Men can think on, there is none that we are more averse to, and none that is more necessary, than Death: This teaches us what Wisdom and what Folly is; this easily enables us to distinguish between Reality and Appearance, between seeming, superficial, and solid Good; this shews us what we are to hope, and what to fear, what to shun, and what to pursue; in one word, nothing does so well instruct us, what should be the great Business and Aim of Life, and what is the true Value of the World, as Death. And yet notwithstanding these are the Fruits of this Meditation, how backward are we to enter upon it? The Young and Healthy,

VOL. I. the Rich and Fortunate, cannot endure to think on it, because they are fond of Life: The Aged and the Unfortunate, though they have no reason to desire to live, having no Gust nor Relish of Worldly Things, yet are unwilling and afraid to die, and therefore do put the Thoughts of it as far from them as they can. Some flutter and buz about, like gaudy Flies in the Sun-shine; and others, like laborious Ants, are perpetually toiling and travelling to lay up: Some are too busy, and others too jolly and merry to think, and especially to think on Death. What, say they, shall we die daily in these sad and dark Reflexions? It's enough to die once, the evil Day will come time enough, we need not anticipate it; why should we sour the Enjoyments of Life, with the Thoughts of Death, which no Solicitude, no Caution, can ever prevent? This is the Humour, and this is the Practice of most: But from what I have said of the Necessity of *laying to Heart* our Latter End, it appears how ill all this is grounded; and it will farther appear, if we consider these two or three Things;

First, That God has contriv'd many Calls to this sort of Meditation.

Secondly,

Secondly, That we can reap nothing Ser. I.
from neglecting it. Nor,

Thirdly, Suffer any thing by practi-
sing it.

First: That the Providence of God
has contrived almost innumerable Ways
to put us in Mind of Death. The Face
of Nature, every Winter does, by its De-
cay and Impotence, wrapp'd up in Snow
as in a Winding-Sheet, represent Death
to us. The Setting of the Sun, and the
Darkness of the Night, does daily sug-
gest to us, that our Race will be soon
run, and our Eyes clos'd in the Shades
of Death. There's not a Meal we make,
but tells us we are mortal, and that it
is a corruptible Body which stands in
need of frequent Repair. We never
take our Rest, but it's a Confession of
our Weakness, and an Image of that In-
sensibleness and Stupidity which must
oppress us at last. We cannot walk the
Streets, but we see the Young grown
old, and the Old decrepid. We come
not to this Church without passing over
Graves; nor can we stand here, but on the
Bodies of our Friends and Relations.
In one word, there's not a Breath we
draw, but may convince us how short and
uncertain Life is; and even now while

VOL. I. I talk of Death, and you hearken to me, the Sand runs out, Time passes on, and Eternity is approaching. We know that we are continually drawing nearer and nearer to that Moment which shall be our last; why then should we not follow the Contrivance, and comply with the Insinuations of Providence? What do we mean by banishing those Thoughts which are apparently so necessary and important in themselves, and proclaim'd so by the Great Author of all Things?

But, *Secondly*, What do we get by putting the Thoughts of Death from us? Will it never come, if we never think on't? Do we need no Preparation for it? Or shall we be the better prepar'd for it, the less we are concern'd about it? Shall we die more easily or more comfortably, because we never consider what it is to Die? Or will our Latter End, in short, be more happy, because *we never lay it to Heart*, that we must have an End, and never inquire what a kind of one it will be? This sure none can imagine. Why then are we so unwilling to think on Death? especially since,

Thirdly, We shall suffer nothing by it. Yes, say you, these are melancholy Thoughts. I answer, Here lies the great Mistake; The Thoughts of Death are indeed melan-

melancholy to the Wicked, but pleasant Ser. I.
to the Good: They do not tend to im-
bitter, but to regulate the Enjoyments,
and govern and bound the Designs of
Life; they make us more secure and
fearless, more modest and resign'd;
and though they take us off from the
Hurries and Fatigues of Life, from the
Noise and Madness of Mirth, they give
us in lieu of them Ease, and Rest, and
Tranquillity, and fit us to enjoy Good
without Vanity of Mind, and to encoun-
ter and bear Evil without Dejection or
Despondency. I now go on,

II. To consider how the House of
Mourning is proper to furnish us with
Matter for our Meditation on this Sub-
ject. Whether we go to visit the Sick,
or pay the last Office to a departed Friend
at his Funeral; or whether we go to
comfort those that mourn for the loss of
him; each of these is full of excellent
Instruction.

Let us go to the Chamber of the Sick.
The Curtains are drawn; and not only Va-
nity, but the very Light that shews it, is
in part shut out; every thing has an Air
of Sadness and Pensiveness round about;
and this poor Creature, whose Wealth,
or Power, or Beauty, or Learning, did,
but

VOL. I. but a few Days ago, make much Noise, draw after it much Admiration, command much Respect, and kindle much Envy and Emulation; this poor Creature, I say, lies now in a mean and pitiable, and, if there were not another Life, I would add, a despicable Condition. Nature is shrunk, decay'd and defac'd; the Mind is sunk, and the Body perishing. Here's no regard now for the State, no gust for the Pleasures of Life, none gaze, none envy now; his Enemies do not fear him, and his Companions forsake him: What Strugglings of Nature may we discern in the Body labouring under the Disease? What Conflicts of the Soul between Belief and Doubts, between Hopes and Fears, between the Reflexions on what's past, and the uncertain Apprehensions of what's to come?

But let us go on naturally from the Sick to the Funeral. What does this present us with? Too often indeed with Pomp and State, but it's a black, sad and gloomy one: All is Silence, all is Night; but what we especially see is a Coffin, a Carcass, a Grave, the Tears and Grief of Relations and Friends. Shou'd we be allow'd, or should we have the Curiosity to view the Carcass it self; Ah! how much chang'd is this from what it was?

was? How void of Sense, of Life and Ser.d./
Motion? How far is it from Wit and
Understanding? So far from Beauty,
that we can scarce bear the Sight, or en-
dure the Stench. Ah! to what a Con-
dition must all those, that make this Day
such a Figure and Stir in the World,
be one time reduced.

Let us, in the Last Place, visit the
Friends of the Deceas'd. Whether
this may always be call'd a House of
Mourning, I know not; it's always
pretended such, but is often in reality
otherwise: But if it be, or be not, we
may here commonly learn the Character
of the Dead. If the Death of any one
is more welcome to those that survive,
than his Life was, we may from thence
conclude, that his Life was not very
useful, and that he was not very amia-
ble or considerable. A Man lives to very
little purpose, when those about him,
whom he liv'd and had to do with, can
lose him, without missing him; and
generally to an ill one, when nothing
but a Man's Death creates them a real
Pleasure and Advantage; tho' there in-
deed great Allowance must be oftentimes
made for the Stupidity, Ingratitude, and
Selfishness of the Living. Now, on
the other side, let us suppose this a
House

VOL. I. *House of Mourning*; bidet us suppose the Friends and Relations do mourn sincerely for him; because he who was the Life and Joy, Light and Spirit of All, is extinguish'd; he that was the Beauty and Ornament of the Family, is dead; he that was the Prop, and Support of it, is fallen and gone to Dust. What, think you, do the Language of their Sorrows, what do their Sighs and Tears speak? Alas! we cannot be at a loss to interpret 'em. Silence it self is here eloquent; but commonly the Subject of their Discourse is, the Character of the Deceas'd; his Virtues are magnify'd; and his Defects, if mention'd, pity'd and extenuated. In a word, if we come to the House of Mourning in this Sense, as the Good and Bad, the Wise and Foolish die in it promiscuously, so the Passions vented on this occasion are mix'd and various: some commend the Virtues, others pity or extenuate the Faults of the Deceas'd, using them like Foils or Shades to set off the more illustrious Parts of his Character to the better Advantage, and in the clearer Light; some enjoy the Fruits of his Industry and Conduct; and others suffer the ill Effects of his Mis-carriages: some express a pleasant and grateful Remembrance of past Endearments;

ments; and others exprels their Re-Ser. I.
 sentments of past Unkindnesses, by In-
 differency and Unconcernment: some,
 finally, talk of the Grounds they have of
 Hope and Comfort, in reference to the
 Deceas'd; and others talk of none, be-
 cause they have none to talk on. But
 however these deport themselves, we
 may from them generally learn what is
 good and ill in Life; what renders Men
 truly useful or unprofitable; what en-
 dears their Friends and Relations to
 them; or what disaffects them; and
 what it is, finally, that renders Death
 desirable or dreadful, comfortable or me-
 lancholy. Having thus view'd the House
 of Mourning, as it supplies Matter
 for our Meditation; I proceed, in the
 Third Place, to shew, That the Medita-
 tion of Death will make us truly wise.

III. This is the Reason *Solomon* him-
 self gives us, why he prefers the *House of*
Mourning before that of *Feasting*, in the
 Verse immediately following my Text;
Sorrow is better than Laughter: for by
the Sadness of the Countenance the Heart
is made better. But this will farther ap-
 pear from these three Things:

1st, This kind of Meditation teaches
 us what Death is.

2^{dly}, What

Vol. I.

2^{dly}, What Life is. And,3^{dly}, How we are to prepare for Death.

1st, This will teach us what Death is. It is called *the End of all Men*, in my Text; and it is said, *That it is appointed for all Men once to die.*

Heb. ix.

27.

*Pallida Mors equo pulsat pede pauperum tabernaculum
Regumque Turres,*

Ecclef. ii.

16.

Death visits alike the Courts of Princes, and the Cottages of poor Men; *As dies the Fool, so dies the Wise*; as dies the Mean, so dies the Mighty; all go to the same Place, all have the same End; here ends the Man, and here end his Delights and Projects; here ends Life, and here ends all the Power and Interest he has in others; and commonly, here ends all the Value and Affections others have for him.

Ecccl. xiii.

7.

Nor do all Men only die, but, with respect to the natural Notion of Death, they die alike. Death is the same thing to them All; it is the Dissolution of that Tie or Union between Soul and Body wherein Life consists. *The Dust, i. e. the Body, returns to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit returns to God who gave it.* Death is to All an eternal Adieu to this World, and it's to All the Passage unto another. Death, again, is the great Trial

Trial of Man, and discovers plainly what Ser. I. he is; it shews us what a poor contemptible thing Man were, if the Body were the Whole of him; it exposes the Weakness of those vain and fine Notions which we sometimes form of our selves; it undeceives us, whether we will or no, and shews us, that we are but Dust; *for Gen. iii. Dust we are, and unto Dust shall we return.* 19. But when, I say, Death discovers what we are; I mean this, not only of the Natural, but Moral Man too; Death discovers whether we have been wise or foolish; whether we have been wicked or virtuous; whether our Professions and Pretensions were hypocritical and formal, or real and sincere; whether they were well or ill-grounded.

But tho' it be appointed for all Men once Heb. ix. to die, yet Death is a very different thing 27. to different Men; to one, it is a Harbour, a Retreat from the Storms, and Toils, and Evils of Life; to another, it is like Execution, or Exile, or any violent Separation from all which they count Good: to one, it is the Passage into Immortality and Glory; to another, it is the beginning of endless and terrible Calamity and Distress: to one therefore it is desirable, to another dreadful; one dies in Faith, the other in Stupidity; one dies in Anguish, the other in Peace and Hope. *The Wicked* Prov. xiv. 32. is

Vol. I. is driven away in his Wickedness, but the *Righteous hath Hope in his Death.* To conclude; The Day of Death is the most miserable or the most happy that can befall Man. Of what Importance these Thoughts are, it is easy for us to see; if we would ponder and revolve them often, it is evident we should learn these two Lessons at least from them:

1st. That the wisest thing we can do in Life, is to learn and prepare to Die. *1 Cor. v. 9, 10.* Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. And,

2dly, That we have no reason to set any great Value either on the World, or Ourselves, since It and We must so soon have an End. *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World, saith St. John.* What it is he means by the World, and the things of the World, he explains in the next Verse, where he reckons up all that is in the World, under the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. And why is it that he presses us to this Indifferency for the World? He subjoins these two Reasons;

Reasons; the one is, because the Love of Ser. I.
the World is inconsistent with the Love
of the Father; *for if any Man love the
World, the Love of the Father is not in
him,* these things being repugnant to
the Nature and Will of God, because
they are not of the Father, but of the
World: And the other is, what I have here
given you, because *the World passeth away,
and the Lust thereof:* but *he that doth
the Will of God, abideth for ever.* This
minds me of the second Use of this
Meditation, *viz.* that it will teach us
what Life is. When we come to sum
up all at Death, we shall do it as *Jacob* Gen. xlvii
did, Few and evil have the Days of the 9.
Years of my Life been.

1st, *Few*; thus they seem'd to *Jacob*,
and thus they seem'd, I doubt not, to
Methuselah himself; and if to them who
liv'd the one above Seven score, and
the other near a Thousand Years, how
much more to us, whose Life is but
a Span long? A few Years indeed seem
long, when to come; but very short,
when past. Then Life is indeed as a *Psal. xc,*
Tale that is told, and Man his Days are 9.
*as Grass, as a Flower of the Field so he
flourisheth; for the Wind passeth over it,
and it is gone, and the Place thereof shall
know it no more.* But,

C

2^{dly}, They

VOL. I. *2^{dly}*, They are not only few, but evil too. Life at best, I mean the animal, natural Life, is but a dull insipid Thing; a Man may be sooner tir'd than satisfy'd with the best and greatest Entertainments that it affords; it is but a continual Circle, a dull Round of the same empty Pleasures that we are fatiated and cloy'd with, and pursue no longer thro' Appetite, but Custom; not because it pleases, but because we can find nothing better. This Worldly Good is in it self deceitful in Prospect, unsatisfactory upon Trial, and when often repeated, tasteless, and almost nauseous. But how many are the Evils of Life? What Losses and Disappointments do continually vex and torment us? What Misfortunes and Diseases do we ever and anon labour under? What Want and Hardship are we sometimes forced to struggle with? And, in a word, the whole Lives of some are but one melancholy Scene of Disorder and Confusion, Distress and Misery. If then the Sensual Life were all that we call Life, there were certainly nothing in it truly valuable, truly desirable; if this were the Whole of Life, there were nothing in it worth our Care, or worthy of our Affection; nothing to reward our Toil, or recompence our Anxiety. The very

very Fear of Death alone, that hangs Ser. I.
perpetually over our Heads, is sufficient
to dash all those little Satisfactions we
might otherwise reap from the Things
that are to be found here; for when
Death approaches, we can carry nothing
of them away with us, unless it be the
Guilt and Imputation of them. *We* ^{1 Tim. vi. 7.}
*brought nothing into this World, and it is
certain we can carry nothing out.* Our
Riches we must leave all behind, but to
whom we can't tell, *whether a wise Man
or a Fool*, whether to one that will make ^{Ecclef. ii. 19.}
a good or bad Use of them, to one that
will love or despise us, to one that will
impute it to our Prudence and Kindness
for him, or to our Ambition or Covetous-
ness. There are too many who are
ready to say, that their Parents laid up
Estates as they begot Children, only to
gratify their own Humour and Lust,
and consequently they did no more
live than die for them; for in the one
they follow'd their Appetite, in the
other their Destiny.

A serious and frequent Meditation up-
on Death, will, in this manner, soon
confute those false Notions of Life we
may perchance have form'd to ourselves;
as if we had nothing to do in it but to
take our Pleasure, and to set up our Rest
here;

VOL. I. here ; and teach us what the true one is,
 namely, *to work the Works of him that sent us into the World, while it is Day ; for the Night cometh when no man can work.*
 It is to do the Works of Life, the Works of a reasonable Creature, the Works of G O D. It is to act as in a State of Trial and Probation, to purify and improve the Mind, to worship G O D, and to do good to Man. It is to secure to our selves an Interest in the Blessed *Jesus*, by Obedience to his Word, by the Imitation of his Life, by a fervent Love of him, and an humble Reliance on him. Finally, to live, is to act not only like a Rational Person, but like one Regenerate and Sanctified ; *i. e.* it is *to seek in the first place, and with all our Might, the Kingdom of Heaven and the Righteousness thereof, that good part which shall not be taken away from us :* And when that is done, it is to be modest in our Desires, content with our Share of the good Things of Life, moderate and thankful in the Enjoyment of 'em, and resign'd and patient under all Dispensations. This and this only is to Live ; this and this only is the true way to prepare for Death, and to *lay up a good Foundation for the time to come.* This brings me to the 3d Thing

John ix.
4.

Matt. vi.
33.

Luke x.
42.

1 Tim. v.
19.

Thing this Meditation will teach us, Ser. I.
namely,

3^{dly}, What Preparation is necessary
for Death. From what I have said con-
cerning Death, it's evident, that though
Death be attended with much Restless-
ness, Disorder, Sickness, and sometimes
Pain of Body; yet the greatest Trou-
ble and sharpest Conflict is in the Mind:
It is the Mind that is rais'd or dejected,
the Mind that is firm and constant, or
anxious and broken; it is the Mind that
is filled with Peace and Joy, Distress or
Anguish. And it is as plain, that the
Terror of Death, in a departing Soul,
springs from Sin; and its Peace and Joy,
from Faith in our Lord *Jesus Christ*;
according to that Triumphant Apostro-
phe of St. Paul, *O Death where is thy* 1 Cor. xv.
Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? 55, 56, 57.
The Sting of Death is Sin, and the
Strength of Sin is the Law: But thanks
be to God, which giveth us the Victory,
through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is
Christ who has disarm'd Death, Christ
who has triumph'd over Hell it self,
Christ who has offer'd up a Satisfaction
for Sin, and abolish'd the condemning
Power of the Law; he therefore is our
Strength and Glory, our Hope and
Comfort and Rejoycing, even in Death
itself.

VOL. I. itself. And as all this is plain, so is it farther as plain too, and as fully inculcated by Death, that none can have an Interest in Christ, without sincere Repentance, and thorough Reformation of Life.

1 John i. *If we walk in the Light, as God is Light, then may our Joy be full; for then have we Fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit; and then, but not otherwise, the Blood of Christ cleanses us from all Unrighteousness.* If then we would prepare for Death; if we would be able to defy it, and even rejoyce to meet it; if we would disarm this King of Terrors of his Power and Sting, we must do these Four Things;

1. We must break off our Sins.
2. We must be doing some Good every Day.
3. We must every Evening recommend our Souls to G O D, as if it were to be our last.
4. We must frequent the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper.

1. We must break off our Sins, and that betimes; for a guilty Conscience will rage extremely on a Sick-Bed. That Death that scatters Shade and Darkness upon the Things of the World, disperses

disperſes that Night and Miſt which we Ser. I.
had caſt about our Actions, and ſcatters
as it were a new Day upon them. Now
we ſee that Loathſomneſs and Deformi-
ty in our Vices, which we could never
be convinced of before; now we diſco-
ver that Horror and Danger in Sin,
which we could never be made ſenſible
of before. If then we would die in
Peace, we muſt break off our Sins, and
break them off betimes too. We muſt
not ſtay till we come to bid an Eternal
Adieu to our Sins, and the World toge-
ther; for if we never forſake our Sins,
till our Strength and Vigour forſake us;
if we purſue and continue in them, till
we find no Guſt nor Reliſh in them, we
ſhall certainly be in very great Doubt
of our own Integrity, and very juſtly;
we ſhall doubt whether we, or the
World, be chang'd; whether the Tem-
per of our Mind, or the State of our Body,
be alter'd. If we turn to G O D, when
we are fit for nothing elſe, and nothing
elſe fit for us, it is impoſſible but we muſt
doubt whether we hate Sin, and love
G O D, or are only carried that Way
which the Nature of Things and the Ne-
ceſſity of our Affairs inevitably drives us.
And if this be our Caſe, what Confidence
can we have in God, when our own Heart

VOL. I. misgives us? What Assurance can we have to rely on Christ, when the Ground sinks under us, that we would build upon? How can we be sure that we believe and repent, when we can produce no plain Proof of either of them? And it is not a slight, superficial and uncertain Hope, that will stand the Shock and repel the Terrors of Death.

2. If we would die in Peace, we must do some Good every Day. *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.* What Works can follow him that never did any good ones? It is easy to frame an Answer to this Demand: But by good Works, I do not mean only the bestowing Alms, the comforting the Afflicted, the rescuing the Oppressed, the instructing the Ignorant, the reproving the Sinner, &c. though all these Things are exceeding good, and have a prevailing Influence on G o d, through our Mediator, and a happy Influence upon our own Minds in the Day of Death: But I mean farther, Prayer and Thanksgiving to G o d, Reflexion on our Ways, every Act of Sorrow for our Sin, every Instance of Self-denial, every Endeavour after Righteousness, and even the due Discharge of our Secular Profession, if it be but begun
with

Rev. xiv.
13.

with Prayer, and in the Fear of G O D, Ser. I. manag'd with Justice and Charity, and concluded with Thankfulness. If a Heathen could say, that he had lost the Day, when he had done no Good in it, or conferr'd no Benefit on any Man; what may a Christian think and say in such a Case? Ah! that we could ever have in our Minds the Words of that great Apostle; *Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* Whatever Difficulty, whatever Trouble we meet with in doing Good of any kind; the Peace and Comfort of it in Death, and the Reward of it in Eternity, do sufficiently out-balance all.

3. Recommend your Souls every Evening, &c. Imagine it to be the last, as it may be; for it is no uncommon thing for a Man to go well to Bed, and never rise from it more, being either surpriz'd by immediate Death, or a Sickness that proves the last. Hence is that Advice of Solomon; *Boast not of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.* Imagine, I say, this Evening to be thy last; imagine that you shall never lie down again to Rest, but

1 Cor. xv.
58.

Pro. xxvii.
1.

VOL. I. but in the Grave; and that you shall never be concern'd more about Worldly Things, but only to render an Account of your Behaviour and Conduct towards them; and that your Body is never to rise up again, till it shall awake at the Sound of the Last Trumpet. Imagine that you are speedily to pass into another World, and to be presented before the Tribunal of G O D: Are you ready, are you fit to die? *Is your House set in Order?* Are your Spiritual Accounts stated? Is your Soul in a calm, holy, heavenly Frame, such as you desire it to dislodge out of the Body in? Have you good Grounds to think, that your Faith and Repentance are sincere, and that you have an Interest in Christ? In one word; Can you calmly resign up your Spirit to G O D, as into the Hands of a *Faithful Creator*, and Gracious Father? Happy are they that can lie down each Night in this Condition! How far, alas, are the Regenerate from it? And how little do we endeavour after it? We go to Rest, generally tir'd with the Business, ruffled and discompos'd with the Disappointments and cross Accidents of the Day. We go to Rest, weary of the Emptiness of Life, polluted by the Sensuality of it, oppressed

II. xxxviii

1.

1 Pet. iv.
19.

oppressed by full Meals or frequent Ser. I.
Draughts, over-loaded and over-charg'd
with the Guilt of some Sin or other. Is
it thus we are prepar'd to die? Is it
thus we give up ourselves to that Night
and Sleep, which is at least an Image
of Death, and ought to put us seriously
in mind of it?

4. And Lastly; We are frequently
to participate of the Holy Sacrament.
Most Men covet this when Sick: Cer-
tainly it would be of as good Use to 'em
when Well. The Lord's Supper is a Sa-
crament; not a Charm: It is not the
meer Performance of the Action of Eat-
ing the Bread, and Drinking the Cup;
but the Virtues and Graces that accom-
pany and are excited by a worthy Re-
ceiving, which entitle us to the Benefits
of Christ's Death, and will make us reap
Strength and Comfort from it. It is
true, the Lord's Supper is wont to be
styl'd the *Viaticum* of departing Souls,
and is undoubtedly extremely well fitted
to strengthen the Faith and Hope of a
Christian, in the Day of Trial; but it
will serve these Ends more effectually,
if we frequent it carefully in the Day of
Life and Strength. What can be a bet-
ter Preparation for Death, than Self-
Examination, and Contrition for our
Sins,

VOL. I. Sins, than Faith in *Jesus Christ*, with a grateful Acknowledgment of his Love? And, in what can these Virtues be better exercis'd, what can more powerfully oblige or invite us to them; what can more effectually quicken, cherish and increase them, than the frequent Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*? Here Christ is represented in a sensible Manner, as Dying for us; his Body broken, and his Blood shed: Here we are invited to contemplate the Sacramental Elements; as Pledges of his Love, and Seals of the Remission of our Sins: Here we are therefore call'd to examine ourselves, to repent us of our Sins, to forgive the World, and to make an open Declaration of *JESUS's* being the Saviour of the World, by this our Solemn and Thankful Commemoration of his Death. And whoever can do these Things sincerely, *dwells in Christ, and Christ in him*: And then he may defie

Rom.viii. 1. Death; for *there's no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; but they may triumph in the Words of the Apostle, *What shall we then say to these Things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spar'd not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us all, how shall*

Rom.viii. 31,32,33, 34.

shall he not with him also freely give us Ser.I.
all Things? Who shall lay any thing to
the Charge of God's Elect? It is God
that justifieth: Who is he that con-
demneth? It is Christ that dy'd, yea
rather that is risen again, who is even
at the right Hand of God, who also
maketh Intercession for us.

The End of the First Sermon.



S E R.

...for ...

shall be ...
all things ...
the Church of God's Elect ...
that ...
It is Christ ...
rather than ...
as the right Hand of God ...
mankind ...

The End of the ...

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SERMON II.

Shewing in what Respects, and
for what Reasons, the Righte-
ous and the Wicked Die alike.

ECCLES. ii. 15.

*Then said I in my Heart, as it happeneth
to the Fool, so it happeneth even to me;
and why was I then more Wise? Then
I said in my Heart, that this also is
Vanity.*



SOLOMON tells us, that Ser. II.
Wisdom, by which he means both Knowledge and Reli- Eccles. ii.
gion, *excelleth Folly, as far* 13.
*as Light, excelleth Dark-
ness*; and he gives us this Reason for it,
The Wise Man's Eyes are in his Head, -- Ver. 14.
but the Fool walketh in Darkness. And
yet considering that the same Event hap-
peneth

VOL. I. peneth both to the Wise and Fool, he begins to reckon Wisdom it self amongst the rest of Vanities, and seems to question what Benefit or Preheminence he enjoy'd by being Wise: *Then said I in my Heart, As it happeneth to the Fool, so it happeneth even to me: And why was I then more Wise? Then I said in my Heart, that this also is Vanity.*

These and the like Reflexions on the State of the World, and the confus'd Events of Human Life, have tempted some to arraign the Author of this Book of Sadducism; when the Truth is, he doth directly aim at the Overthrow of all such Principles, by shewing the absurd Consequences of them, and demonstrating the Necessity of another Life, in order to solve these and the like Objections; for the Argument of the whole Book runs thus: All Temporal Things are *Vanity and Vexation*, and therefore there must be another Life, or else there can be no Difference between Wisdom and Folly, between Righteousness and Impiety; which is monstrously absurd. And again; If the Discretion of Man did consist only in a skilful Pursuit and wise Conduct of Temporal Affairs, there would be little Difference between Knowledge and Ignorance,

rance, between Wisdom and Folly, between Man and the Beast; all which being monstrously absurd, it must follow, that there is a Wisdom of another kind; Wisdom that consists in a true Knowledge of the Vanity and Uncertainty of Human Things, and in preparing and providing for Eternity.

Having thus laid before you the Scope and Design of this whole Book, you can't but easily comprehend the Sense and Meaning of that Place of it I have now chosen for my Text; and therefore, without adding any thing for the farther Explanation of it, I propose to speak to these Two Propositions:

I. What those things are that happen to the Wise, even as they happen to the Fool.

II. What it is that in these Events puts a Difference between the Wise and the Fool. And,

I. What those things are, &c. This he elsewhere extends to all Events; as, *The Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wise, nor yet Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill;*

D

Skill;

VOL. I. Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to them all. And a little before that, in

--Ver. 2. the same Chapter, *All things come alike to all: there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked, to the Good, and to the Clean, and to the Unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the Good, so is the Sinner; and he that Swareth, as he that feareth an Oath.* But in this Chapter, of which my Text is a part, he speaks with respect only to Death:

First, Because the Wise and Fool both Die; and how dieth the Wise Man? As the Fool.

Secondly, Because they Die alike. For Death doth not in the time of its Approaches observe any Difference, or pay any more Respect or Ceremony to the Wise than the Fool; it stays not till the Wise Man hath dispatch'd the Great and Divine Works he is about, or till he has spun out Life to its natural Period, and so retires, *ut Conviva Satur*; but untimely, unseasonably it cuts off the Wise and Good Man, sometimes in the Midst, sometimes in the Beginning of a Virtuous Life, as it does the Fool in the Midst or Beginning of a Vicious one. Nor,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Doth Death observe any more Distinction between the Wise and the Fool, in the Manner, than in the Time of its Approaches. Painful or Gentle Diseases, Speedy and Sudden, or Slow and Lingring Deaths, happen to both alike; and Diseases do not abate any thing of their Fury, Pain and Torture, when they assault the Bodies of the Wise, more than when those of Fools. This is the Substance of that Event which equals the Wise and Fools.

1st. They both die. Death observes not those Distinctions that Fortune or Custom doth; it hath no Regard for the Rank or Quality, or for the Talents or Endowments of any. Thus *Job*, whilst he describes the Grave, describes it by a Mixture of those of all Ranks and Conditions. *I should have slept, — with Job iii. Kings and Counsellors of the Earth, which 13-19 built desolate Places for themselves: or with Princes that had Gold, who fill'd their Houses with Silver: or as an hidden untimely Birth I had not been; as Infants which never saw Light. There the Wicked cease from Troubling; and there the Weary be at Rest. There the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor. The Small and Great are there, and the Servant is free*

VOL. I. *from his Master.* He might have added, *There the Holy and the Sinful, there the Wise and the Foolish, there the Learned and the Idiot, mix their undistinguish'd Dust, and lie confus'd together. Menander* the Heretick, indeed, promis'd his Followers a present Immortality, even in this World; but our Saviour made no such Promises to his. Holiness, tho' it translates a Man into the Image of G o d, doth not exempt him from the Condition of Man; tho' it restore him to the Innocence of *Adam* in a great measure, it restores him not to his Paradise or Immortality: What shall we say of this? Shall we take upon us to inquire, why G o d, who thought fit to redeem us by Christ, from Sin, and the Eternal Punishment of it, thought not fit to remit the **Pl. xxxvi.** Temporal? I know the *Judgments of God*
 6. *are a great Deep, and his Ways un-*
Rom. xi. searchable, and *past finding out*: how-
 33. ever, tho' we cannot pry into the *Arcana Imperii*, into the secret Causes and Reasons of all his Actions; yet we ought not to let pass, without Observance and Contemplation, any Acts or Parts of his Divine Providence, where his Wisdom, Power and Goodness are so conspicuous as they are in this. We may therefore, without examining (as some have done
 with

with much Heat) whether Death be not Ser. II.
 to be interpreted as the inseparable Con-
 dition of our Nature, as well as the
 Punishment of our Sins, or the Sin of
Adam; or whether *Adam* himself should
 not have tasted Death, e'er he had been
 translated into Eternal Life, as the Fa-
 thers of the *Trent* Council think those
 Righteous Persons shall, who will be
 found alive at the Coming of Christ,
 who they think cannot put off Mor-
 tality, and put on Immortality, without
 suffering a short Trance or a Momentary
 Death, in that inconceivable Transmu-
 tation: Without entering upon these sub-
 til and curious Discussions, we may see
 many plain Reasons why G o d permits
 the Wise and Religious to die together
 with the Fool and Sinner, tho' the one
 be actually Partaker of the Redemption
 of Christ, and the other be not.

1. The Redemption of Christ is but
 imperfect, and begun in this Life. We
 are not here entirely freed from Sin,
 and therefore cannot be exempt from
 Death; we shall then be Immortal,
 when we are Impeccable, when we are
 Perfect; we are not here freed from the
 Moral Imperfections of the Spirit, and
 therefore neither from the Natural Cor-
 ruptions of the Body.

D 3

2dly: We

VOL. I

Eph. v. 5.

2^{dly}: We are not able to determine of what great Use Death may be, to prepare the Souls of Righteous Men for the Heavenly State they are to enter into. It is true, that in that final Judgment that is to be pass'd upon our Lives, we stand not under the Protection of our own, but Christ's Righteousness; but 'tis as true, that because nothing *Unclean* can enter into Heaven, that we, e'er we can be fit for that Holy Place, must put off all the least Mixtures of Sin, and all the least Remains of Impurity, and must have holy, perfect and undefiled Souls; and this is not to be attained in Life. Who can tell how necessary, how instrumental Death is to the effacing and extinguishing in the Souls of the Righteous the Mixture and Remains both of Contracted and Original Corruptions? This, thro the Grace and Assistance of G o d, may be that Purgatory which the *Romish* Church do think so necessary after Death. But because we know not what Moment the great Work of Purification, that thoroughly fits a Soul for Heaven, is perform'd in, nor what Share to assign Death, and what degree of Efficacy to ascribe to the Spirit of G o d in this Work; therefore I will not lay so great a Stress upon this Argument, as from

from hence to infer the Necessity of the Ser. II.
Death of the Righteous. All that I de-
sire from this, is, to shew you, that
Death is, thro' the wise Contrivance of
G o d's Providence, apt and serviceable
to prepare the Souls of Righteous Men
for a Heavenly State.

3dly. By this way of dealing, our
Wise G o d has contriv'd the Advance-
ment of Man's Happiness, by putting
into his Hands this Opportunity of
exercising and improving all the Graces
of his Spirit. This is the Time that
doth most necessarily require all the
Strength of Faith, all the Passion of Di-
vine Love, all the Firmness of Hope,
all the Calmness and Patience of Meek-
ness and Self-Resignation. All these
Graces the Devout Soul has occasion to
exert in this Last Day of Trial and Con-
flict; and as the Phenix, they say, ex-
hales its Soul in a Fire of Sweets and
Frankincense; or, as *Manoah's Angel* Judg. xiii.
ascended in the Flames of the Altar; so 20.
doth the devout Soul mount up to Hea-
ven in the Perfumes and Incense of all
these Graces kindled into a Divine Flame
by the Spirit of G o d: For *this Trial of* 1 Pet. i. 7.
your Faith, being much more precious than
of Gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried
with Fire, will be found unto Praise and
Honour,

VOL. I. Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Lastly: Death makes Way for the Manifestation of G O D's Omnipotence, which he shall then exert, when the Grave shall give up the Dead, and our Blessed Saviour shall, in the Power of G O D, triumph over his last Enemies, Hell and Death. Nor is the Power only, but the Goodness also of G O D, render'd more Illustrious by the Death of the Righteous; since to bestow an Heaven upon them, is a Bounty infinitely greater than the bestowing upon them Immortality in this World. How poor a thing were Immortality in the richest, happiest State upon Earth, compar'd with the Hopes and Expectations of the Children of G O D?

But be the Reasons of G O D, for the Temporal Death of the Righteous, what they will, Die they do; and as they are clad with the same Corruptible Bodies, so have they the same common End with the Fools and Vicious, Death and Corruption.

2. Nor are the Approaches of Death, in respect of Time, more Just and Regular towards the Wise than Foolish. G O D indeed, especially under the Old Testa-

Testament, as he promis'd Prosperity to Ser. II. the Righteous, so did he long Life to enjoy it; and Solomon has, in other Places, observ'd of Wisdom, that *Length of Days is in her Right-Hand, and in her Left-Hand Riches and Honour.* And God hath annex'd the Promise of a long Life to the Fifth Commandment, as the Reward of Dutifulness and Obedience to Parents Civil, Spiritual and Natural; and yet it must be confess'd, that the Wise and Virtuous, as well as the Fool and Sinner, fall by immature and untimely Deaths. Death makes its rude and Morning Visits, as well to those who are employ'd in the great and proper Works of Life, as to those whose Time, Lust prodigally wastes, or Sloth and Ignorance makes lie heavy on their Hands,

Prov. iii.
16.

It was an Observation of the *Heathen*, That those excellent Persons, that did promise most, dy'd soonest; and this happen'd not to the *Heathens* only, but to the *Jews* also; for Solomon has observ'd, That *there is a Just Man that perisheth in his Righteousness, and there is a Wicked Man that longeth his Life in his Wickedness.* And they had their Pious *Josiah's*, and Virtuous *Jonathan's*, as well as the *Heathens* their *Titus's*

Eccle. i. vii.
15.

VOL. I. *Titus's* and *Germanicus's*, who fell in their green and early Years, when others, the Reproaches and Scourges of their Age, liv'd to fill up the Measure of their Days, as well as their Iniquities. And under Christianity, under which Dispensation, tho' the Promises of Temporal Blessings seem not to stand in as full an Height and Vigour, as under Judaism, yet they are not cancell'd; under this we have had, and have daily, vast Numbers, whom early Death stops in the midst of their Race of Virtue and Honour. There are whole Legions of Saints now in the Triumphant Church in Heaven, who were snatch'd away e'er they had finish'd the Course of Nature upon Earth, e'er they had satisfy'd the Expectations and Hopes of the World by Works of Virtue, or the Desire and Affection of their Friends and Relations, by a just Enjoyment of them. How shall we reconcile the Promises and Providences of G O D? Very easily: For, *1st*, They are, for the generality, literally fulfilled.

But, *2^{dly}*: We are to take notice, that G O D, by his Promises, doth not oblige himself to the Letter of them, but to the Design of them. If he bestows upon the Righteous what is Equivalent,

valent, nay, what doth infinitely excel Ser. II, the Advantages of long Life, he must then be thought to do more than make good his Promise; for every Promise of a Temporal Blessing to the Righteous, hath this tacit Condition annex'd to it, If it be Best for him.

The Wise Man takes notice of this Dispensation of Providence, and gives us the best Account of the Reasons of it, and what is the best Use that can be made of it. He tells us, 1st, *That though the Righteous be prevented with Death, yet shall he be in Rest*; a Rest far more delightful than any of the Pleasures of Life. He then hath no Wrong done him, who lives out those Years he lost Here, in Heaven, and exchanges the Uncertainties, the Toyls, the Troubles, the Decays of the Latter declining, i. e. the worse Part of this Mortal Life, for the Youth and Vigour, for the Enjoyment and Glory of an Immortal one.

But he goes on, 2^{dly}, *Honourable Age* - Ver. 8, 9. *is not that which standeth in Length of Time, nor that is measur'd by Number of Years: But Wisdom is the Gray Hair unto Men, and an unspotted Life is Old Age.* Where he would insinuate to us, That God did not design, by his Promises, to give us Time to Spend, but Time to Live,

44 *Why God permits the Righteous to Die*

VOL. I. Live, *i. e.* to do the Great Work of Life; and that it is with Man, as it is with other Beings in Nature. Flowers and Fruit which ripen soonest, are soonest gather'd, and have the shortest Stay; as if G O D and Nature did design, that Perfection and an End should be the same Thing, and that Men should arrive

Ver. 13. at both together, *He being made Perfect in a short Time, fulfilled a long Time.*

Ver. 10. After this follows a 3^d Reason: *He pleased God, and was beloved of him: So that living amongst Sinners, he was translated.* Where there are two Things intimated: The First is, That he was taken away from the Evil to come, as we

1 Kings

xiv. 13.

read of *Abijah*, the Son of *Jeroboam*. *And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the Grave, because in him there is found some good Thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the House of Jeroboam.* And, 2^{dly}, That he was, by this Means, preserv'd from the Hazard of falling, by any Temptation he would otherwise have been assaulted with; *Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that Wickedness should alter his Understanding, or Deceit beguile his Soul.* As if G O D, as a Wise Husbandman, did observe the Season of Harvest as well

Wisd. iv.
11.

as

as Seed-time, and would not suffer Ser. II.
Fruit that was early Ripe, to stay till
it decay'd.

He concludes all, with shewing us what
Use those who surviv'd the early Death of
Pious Persons should make of it; *i. e.* That
they should not, on this Account, tax
or reject the Providence of G O D, as if
he had no Regard to his Saints; but
that they should take care to imitate
those who, in a little Time, had per-
fected the Work of Life; for otherwise
their Length of Days, whilst it increa-
ses their Sins, will increase their Con-
demnation too; *for the Righteous that* --Ver. 16.
is Dead shall condemn the Ungodly that
are Living; and Youth that is soon per-
fected, the many Years and Old Age of the
Unrighteous. Thus you see unerring
Wisdom, and true Kindness and Com-
passion for the Righteous, has the great-
est Share in this Dispensation of G O D's
Providence, I mean the too early Death
of his Saints; but still the Observation of
Solomon holds good, and there is no Diffe-
rence, in this Point, between the Wise
and the Fool: Not Temperance, not
Dutifulness, not Devotion, not the
whole Constellation of Graces, can secure
to any One Length of Life, or stave
off too early, too too Untimely Death.
The

Vol. I. The Ornament, the Honour of his Age or Family, falls undistinguish'd from him, who is the Shame and Reproach of his: The Delight and Hopes of his Relations and Friends dies as Untimely as he, who is the Burden and Plague of his.

Nor, 3^{dly}, Do the Virtuous Die only as Unseasonably, but as Painfully too, as the Vicious do. Violent Fevers and Lingring Consumptions, Melancholy Spleen, and Tormenting Aches, do all alike befall Mankind, without regard to their good or bad Qualities, to their Virtues or Immoralities; and when they do thus befall all alike, they are not softer or gentler to good, than to bad Men. The *Rabbins* say, indeed, of *Moses*, That G o d kiss'd his Soul out of his Body; his *Exit* sure must be a calm and pleasing Ecstasy, not Death: But our Blessed Master gave up his Peaceful Soul in violent Storms of Agonies and Pains. Nor can I perceive, that, in respect of the Body, good Men have any calmer Passages into another World, than bad. And 'tis not without great Reason, that G o d permits this; for thus he at once magnifies his Power in supporting them, and makes their Faith, Humility and Patience, the Instruments of

of advancing his Glory, and encreasing Ser. II.
 their Reward. And yet all this while
 it must be confess'd, that as to the Mat-
 ter of them, the same Events happen to
 the Wise and the Fool; and that if Virtue
 had its Reward only in this World, or
 Wisdom did consist only in the acqui-
 ring or securing our worldly Possessions,
 Wisdom it self might be reckon'd into the
 Number of those Things that *Solomon*
 calls *Vanities*. This will easily appear,
 if we cast up the Sum Total of this
 Discourse. *How dies the Wise? as the* Eccles. ii.
Fool: They both die, and they both die 16.
 alike. The Decree of Death is Irrever-
 sible, inevitable upon all the Sons of
 Men: Alike as to the Time; how soon
 or how late this Decree shall be brought
 to Execution, there is no Rule nor Me-
 thod, but this too happens to the Fool
 and the Wise alike: Alike as to the
 Manner or Instrument of the Execution
 of it; 'tis generally Painful to all; and
 in this too Death has no Regard either
 to Wealth or Power, either to the Vir-
 tue or Merit of any Man; acute or lin-
 gering Pains, violent Pangs, or more to-
 lerable Decays of Nature, ushering in
 Death, befall all sorts of Men alike.

What can be inferr'd more natural
 from hence, than that it is the Height of
 Folly

VOL. I. Folly and Vanity, for any Man to doat or depend upon the Things of this World? For as far as concerns these Things, Wisdom it self cannot rescue us from our Subjection to Vanity. To what purpose do I doat on what I cannot stay to enjoy? To what purpose do I heap up Treasure for Ages, when my own Life is but a Span long? On what false Foundations do I stand, when I am puff'd up, and value my Self and the Greatness of my Possessions? That very Moment that I am promising myself Rest in Life, G o d may pronounce, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee.* I may promise myself Ease and Enjoyment, and G o d may at the same Time be writing down Sickness and Pain: I may be extending my Thoughts to many Years to come, and G o d may at the same Time be blotting and staining the Morrow with Tears, and Pain, and Death, and Mournful Solemnities: And nothing shall prevent this; not Sobriety, not Regularity, not Prayers, nor Tears, nor Alms. O let not therefore any Man, that lays the least Claim to Wisdom, make any thing on Earth the Object of his Dotage and Confidence.

Luke xii.
20.

What

What then hath Wisdom no Prerogative above Folly, or Virtue above Vice? Have the Heavenly and Divine Part of Mankind no Advantage above the Sottish and Brutish Part? Yes, very great; notwithstanding all that has been said, yet *Wisdom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darknes*: Which will appear from the Eccles. ii: 13.

II^d Thing propos'd, The Difference between the Wise Man and the Fool, with respect to these Events. This Difference *Solomon* expresses thus, *The Wise Man's Eyes are in his Head, but the Fool walketh in Darknes*. Which is as if he should have said, The Wise Man foresees the End of all things, and accordingly endeavours to form himself and all things to a Subordination and Subserviency to that End, and welcomes all things that tend to it. He doth therefore look upon Present things as Uncertain and Momentary Possessions, and enjoys them as such, and therefore welcomes every Change that befalls him, nay, he lives in the Expectation of and Preparation for a Change. Doth Sickness seize upon him? He knows that he carries about him a Corruptible Body. Must he Die? He knows he was Born Mortal. Must he part with Wealth and Greatness?

E

He

Vol. I. He knows he has no other Tenure of them, than at the Will of his Great Landlord or Proprietor; and he knows too, that he resigns up this for a better Mansion in Glory.

But the Fool walketh in Darkness, he sees not what will be the End, nay, he foresees not that there will be an End. Tho' Mortal, yet he lives as if he should never die; and tho' all his Possessions be altogether and in every part of them Corruptible and Transitory, subject to Time and Chance, yet he doats upon them, and is puff'd up with vain and arrogant Confidence by them, as if they were as fix'd and immutable as Fate itself; and therefore every Change to him is as unwelcome and troublesome as it is surprizing and unexpected. Doth Sickness overtake him? 'Tis like a boisterous Storm falling upon a gay Flower, which Cracks the Stalk, Tarnishes the Colour, and Effaces all its Beauty; because, alas, it was made only for Sun-shine and Fair-weather. Must he Die? How dismal is that Sound that tells him so! Alas! he is not prepar'd to Die: Come Death when it will, it comes unlook'd for, and carries in it all the Weight and Dread that the most fatal, sudden and astonishing Evil can do. Wretched Man!

he

he knows not how to part with his be- Ser. II.
loved World, and fears and trembles but
to think on another. I may sum up the
Difference between the Wise and the Fool
in this Point, in the Words of Solomon,
The Wicked is driven away in his Wicked- Prov. xiv.
ness; but the Righteous hath Hope in his 32.
Death.

This is the vast Difference of the
Wise and the Fool, even in those Events
which seem to befall them both alike;
and this proceeds from the Cause assign'd
by Solomon, *The Wise Man's Eyes are in* Eccles. ii.
his Head, but the Fool walketh in Dark- 14.
ness.

The Natural Consequence of this
Wisdom therefore, in respect to those
Events I have been discoursing of, is
two-fold. 1. Patience and Chearfulness
in Adversity and Affliction. 2. Peace in
Sickness and Death, whether it comes
Early or Late. This will be your Wis-
dom, this alone will be your Happiness.
Set not your Hearts upon the Riches
and Possessions of this Life; How ea-
sy is it for G O D's Providence to im-
bitter those to you by Sickness and Pain,
and melancholy Accidents? How easy is
it for him to bring in Tides and Springs,
and carry away the Leaky and Sandy
Foundation that you stand so confidently

VOL. I. on? How easy is it for him to surprize thee with Death, in the midst of all thy Gaudy Poms? And this, like Night and Darknes, shed upon the Face of the Earth, will snatch out of thy Sight, for ever, all that thou didst delight in. But if thy Soul lives in the Contemplation of God's Excellencies and Perfections, if it rest upon his Goodness and his Promises, if thou art daily doing the proper Work of Life, and spend thy Time in Preparation for and Expectation of a better; thy Life, thy true Life, thy Happiness, thy true Happiness, shall be fix'd beyond the Reach of Time and Chance; thy Prosperity shall be Regular and Modest; thy Affliction shall be Gentle and Chearful. Sicknes and Death must invade thee; but it shall be only as Winds do strong Ships under Sail, to drive thee over Storms and Billows to thy Harbour.

The End of the Second Sermon.

5 JY61

S E R-



SERMON III.

The Difference there is between
the Wicked and the Righteous
in their Death, with the Rea-
sons of it,

P R O V. xiv. 32.

*The Wicked is driven away in his Wicked-
ness; but the Righteous hath Hope in
his Death,*



KNOW not whence it ^{VOL. I.}
comes to pass, that we
seldom or never talk of
Death, but at a Funeral;
whereas the Wise Men,
even amongst the Heathen themselves,
thought that the Contemplation of
Death ought to be the great Business
of

VOL. I. of Life; and the Son of *Sirac* tells us,
 That if *we would remember our Latter*
End, we should never do amiss. And cer-
 tainly there is no Consideration which
 can more effectually tend to mortifie
 our Lusts and discipline our Fancies, to
 bound and restrain our vain Desires and
 Projects, and to regulate our whole
 Lives; and therefore *Solomon* sends us
to the House of Mourning, to learn Wis-
 dom. And surely, if Example be a more
 excellent Way of Instruction than Pre-
 cept, the Examples of good and virtu-
 ous Men can never be too much study'd,
 especially in those Instances wherein
 they appear in their greatest Lustre
 and Perfection.

Whether we owe more to the Lives
 or Deaths of holy Persons, I know not;
 whether the Wisdom of their Lives, or
 the Courage and Faith of their Deaths,
 gives the greater Lustre to Virtue, and
 attracts more powerfully, I know not,
 nor indeed is it necessary to determine;
 for though we may divide and separate
 them in our Consideration, we must not
 do so in our Imitation. It is not for
 us to hope to *die the Death*, unless we
 live the Life of the *Righteous*: He only
 who practises the Wisdom of their Lives,
 can attain to their Courage and Affu-
 rance

Ecc'us. vii
 36.

Ecc'us. vii. 4.

Num'ers
 xxiii. 10.

rance in Death; For Vice infebles and Ser.III.
softens the Soul as well as Body, and fills
it with vain Desires and guilty Fears,
the *Wicked is driven away in his Wick-*
edness; but Virtue quiets and confirms
the Mind; and having quenched all
the Desires after their Temporal Inter-
est, in the glorious Hopes of an Eternal
one, makes Men look chearfully forward,
and smile upon approaching Death, *The*
Righteous hath Hope in his Death.

The Sense of this Place, in the Inter-
pretation of the *Jews*, is different from
that of the Christians; for the former in-
terpret them of the Miserable State of the
Wicked, and the Comfortable State of the
Good Man, under any Affliction which
can befall him in this Life: The one, ha-
ving no G O D to trust to, must be deject-
ed in his Mind, and perish in his Calami-
ty; but the other having a G O D to rely
upon, suffers chearfully, and being try'd,
is generally deliver'd at last. This was
the constant Perswasion, the receiv'd
Doctrine amongst the *Jews*, and so uni-
versally attested by Observation and Ex-
perience, that the *Psalmist* imputes his
Regret and Trouble at the Prosperity
of the Wicked, to his Stupidity and
Inadvertency, *So foolish was I and igno-*
rant: I was as a Beast before thee. For

Ps. lxxiii
22.

VOL. L nothing else could have hinder'd him from reflecting upon the Shortness and Uncertainty of their Glory, and on the Suddenness and Unexpectedness of their Fall; They spread themselves like a *Green Bay-Tree*, and in a Moment are so blasted and extirpated, that *their very Place* is no where to be found; their Height and Success being nothing else, but a fultry Heat before a Storm, or as we are wont to speak, a sort of Lightning before Death. This is a Consideration that should make us decline the *Way of the Sinner*, shun the Counsel of the Ungodly, and the Seat of the Scornful: This should make us despise the biggest Temptation of the Devil, if at any time he should assault us, as he did our Saviour, when he shew'd him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them; and said unto him, *All these Things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*: For 'tis all but Cheat and Imposture; and the Wicked, in his most flourishing Condition, if rightly consider'd, is a fitter Object of our Compassion and Pity, than our Envy.

Buttho' the Nature of the *Jewish* State, and the Idiom of the *Hebrew* Phrase, will bear this Sense well enough; yet the Christian soars a nobler Flight, and applies

applies the *Place* to the different State Ser.III. and Behaviour of a Vicious and Righteous Man in the Hour of Death, not with respect to the Issue of their Trouble in this Life, but another. In which Sense the Words present us,

I. With an Account of the Difference there is in the Behaviour of the Wicked and the Righteous in their Death: The one is shaken and confounded, disorder'd, and dejected; the other is assur'd and easy, serene and chearful.

II. The Reason of this Difference; it is the Wickedness of the one, and Righteousness of the other.

First, Of the Difference, &c. There are two several times, when, as the Prophet speaks, a Man may most easily discern between the Righteous and the Wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; that is, the Hour of Death, and the Day of Judgment. Both these discover what Hopes Men have, and what Lives they have led; for, however possible it be for Men to be deluded and mock'd by false Opinions, and dilatory Promises in their Lifetime;

Mal. iii.
18.

VOL. I. time; yet they must in the Approach of  Death be convinced, by the Decay of Nature, that there is no Place for any farther Delay; and Conscience awaken'd shakes the false Foundation of vain Opinions. How does the Sensual Man tremble to meet his Death? How does he struggle to retain Life? And with what Pain and Reluctancy is he torn and driven from this World? How does he catch at any thing that he hopes may prolong Life? Now, if God will be put off with Promises, he is large and profuse in them; now he is reconcil'd to tedious Prayers, and the before despicable Priest; and if he could but work a Miracle, and recover him, how dear would he be? Is there no Medicine which can quench the Fever? No Receipt that can compose his Conscience? No; Melancholy and Horror benights every thing without him, and Guilt and Fear the Soul within him. With what wishful, hankering Desires he looks upon this World, and with what distracted, guilty Fear on another? How disconsolate and sorrowful is the before Gay and Frolicksome Sinner? How full of Dread and Confusion the Careless and Supine? How dispirited and Melancholy the Daring and Confident?

But

But if we look upon the Righteous in Ser. III. their Bed of Sickneſs, or rather of State, like the Sun in its Setting, they ſeem more great and glorious in their Death than in their Day of Life and Health. Here you may diſcover what Wonders a true Faith, fervent Charity, and an aſſur'd Hope, can do; how much Comfort a good Conſcience affords a Man at the laſt, and how great a Support ſuch inward Comfort is under the Pain of the Body; how calm and gentle his Soul is in its Sufferings, how looſe and diſingag'd from the World, It was a great Saying of *Seneca*, That a Philoſopher contending with and getting above the Miſery of Human Life, was a Sight fit to invite the Gods to be Spectators. May I not ſay likewiſe, That God and the Angels look down with the higheſt Satisfaction upon a Dying Chriſtian, who on his Bed of Death triumphs over Fears and Pains? For if there be *Joy in Heaven* at the Conversion of a Sinner, what muſt there be at the Death of a Saint, when the great Work of his Life is done, and the laſt Stroke of a Victorious Battle given? I can but fancy, the Miniſtring Angels ſtand by, and having with Applauſe obſerv'd the Courage of the Holy Man, when the Triumphant Soul breaks out of the Body,

Luke xv.

7.

VOL. I. dy, in the last Groan of Nature, they give a Shout of Victory, and the Heavenly Choir flock out to meet and welcome him with Songs of Victory and Triumph; in the same Manner that *Rome* of old us'd to pour forth its numerous Inhabitants to meet and receive a Conqueror that return'd from War loaden with Spoils and Honours. Agreeable to this, is what is said in the Parable of the Rich Man and *Lazarus*, that when
 Luke xvi. *the Beggar died, he was carried by the*
 22. *Angels into Abraham's Bosom.*

But to return: How much above this Life is the dying Saint, and how humbly desirous of a better? How frequently does his Soul, in its Ejaculations, take Flight into its Heaven, and to its God? And then exults and rejoices, as if it retain'd the Tincture of that Divine Place and Conversation; so that the Sorrow of Visitors and Spectators is turn'd into Joy; and their Compassion and Pity into Respect and Wonder; and even Death it self, in such a one, seems to have something great and lovely in it. I will now consider,

II. Whence this Difference of Behaviour between the Wicked and the Righteous proceeds; what it is that makes Death terrible to the Wicked, and
 how

What are the Reasons of this Difference, &c. 61

how the Righteous are enabled to out- Ser.III.
brave those Terrors. ~~~~~

There are Three Things, which make
Death terrible :

1st, The Parting with this World,
the Body, and Sensual Pleasures.

2^{dly}, The Pain and Trouble of the
Disease.

3^{dly}, The Fear of a future State.
The Wickedness of the one increases
the Trouble of each of these ; the
Righteousness of the other lessens it.

1st, As to the Parting with the World,
and the Sensual Pleasures of this Life ;
*Solomon hated all the Labour which he
had taken under the Sun, because he should* Eccles. ii.
leave it unto the Man that should be after 18.
him. And if the Thoughts only of his
being one Day to leave these Things
here to another, were so severe and af-
flicting, that they almost render'd him
incapable of receiving any Pleasure or
Satisfaction from 'em, even whilst they
were in his Possession ; what Grief and
Anguish must the actual quitting and
forsaking them occasion ? We must give
up all our Desires and Hopes, all our
Sensual Joys and Pleasures, and part not
only with our belov'd Country and Home,
but

VOL. I. but also with our Friends and Relations, and all our Projects of Worldly Interest or Pleasure. A long Journey, a long Sleep, are but weak Expressions of Death; 'tis more than can be express'd by a sudden and fatal Penury to the Rich and Covetous, great and sudden Disgrace and Dishonour to the Vain-glorious, strict Confinement to the Libertine, or the Famine of all Pleasure to the Voluptuary; for in the Wicked, the Desires of Nature are improv'd by sensual Enjoyments into Fondness and Passion; the same Conversation has pamper'd the Body, and emasculated the Mind.

But the Righteous, who in their Lifetime had practis'd a constant Course of wise Self-denial, do not find it so difficult a thing to part with the World, which they were before, as to their Affections, divorc'd from. They had

Joh. xviii. 36. learn'd from our Saviour, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, and therefore they always took care to behave themselves as those that knew they *had*

Heb. xiii. 14. *here no continuing City, but were to seek one to come.* Holy and Good Men, therefore, when they come to Die, don't look upon themselves to be torn from their Good Things, but that they are going to be freed from the Miseries and

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Temptations of this World, and to put Ser. III. off that Body which they had never us'd to think of as an Instrument of their Pleasure, but as a heavy Weight that had hung upon them, and clogg'd and damp'd all their Endeavours after Piety and Virtue; according to that in *Wisdom, For the Corruptible Body presseth down the Soul, and the Earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind that miseth upon many things.* In this State of Sickness, they look beyond this gloomy Cloud of Death, and discover the happy Coast of that Country where God and Angels, and Happy Souls, do dwell; a Country infinitely better than theirs now, where Immortal, Perfect Natures enjoy most solid and most lasting Pleasure.

Wisd. ix.
15.

2^{dly}, We are to consider the Painfulness of the Way to Death. Nature is averse to Pain; our blessed Saviour himself did for this Reason, with Sorrow and Reluctance, prepare for the Cross; *If it be possible, let this Cup pass from me.* Mat. xvi. But tho' it be true, that even the Righteous cannot put off Nature, and cannot but abhor Pain, yet there is a great Difference between the Sufferings of the Wicked and the Good, where the Evil or Calamity is the very same; which springs

Vol. I. springs partly from their different Strength and Dispositions, partly from the different Aid and Assistance, and partly from the different Supports and Encouragements the one has above the other.

1. From their different Strength and Dispositions. For the Man who has mortify'd his Sensual Appetites, and inur'd the Body to Hardship, by accustomed it to obey the Precepts of the Mind, whose Soul is strong and manly, through the Discipline of an Austere Virtue: This Man sure is better fitted to suffer, than the unhappy Man whose Body is wanton and ungovernable, whose Passions are strong and violent, his Fancy gay and humourfome, and his whole Soul soft and effeminate. Nor is this all, the Mind of the Righteous Man has many delightful Things with which it entertains itself; it has strong Passions for the Perfection of Righteousness, for the Consummation of its Warfare; and this often makes the Man forget his Trouble, and think the Evil inconsiderable. But the Mind of the Wicked Man feels the utmost of the Evil, suffers all the Pain that rages in the Body, it can think of nothing, or of nothing else at least, but what is as bad or worse; nay,

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commonly it feels a Weight, a Melan- Ser III.
choly more unsupportable than the Anguish of the Body; and I know not what ominous Sorrows bespeak the Presence of Evil Spirits, and bode the Vengeance of approaching Judgment. This is the first Ground of a Difference of the Sufferings of the Righteous, even under the same Calamities, namely, their different Strength and Dispositions.

2. The Good Man has a superadded Strength, a Supernatural Assistance, which the Vicious Man is destitute of; *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* 1. Cor. x. 13.

The Strength of G o d's Spirit, the Spirit of Light and Consolation, is communicated to the Righteous, in proportion to the Strength of their Trials. I see not else how Martyrs could not only endure, but rejoyce in the most grievous Torments; and how the weakest and tenderest of Mankind could, by their Resolution and Patience, baffle the Rage, and vanquish the Cruelty of the most savage Persecutors. Where-ever Faith, Hope and Charity dwell, there the Spirit of G o d dwells too; and that Spirit, which, at the Last Day, will raise us from Death, is able, at any time, to fortifie us against it. If this

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Vol. I. be true, as sure it cannot be deny'd by any one that owns the Gospel, we must conclude, that the Weight of a Calamity fits not so heavy on the Righteous as on the Wicked; since the one is supported by a Strength greater than his own, even the Power of G O D; but the other is forsaken and abandon'd by G O D, given up to the Weakness and Cowardice of a decay'd broken Body, and to the Guilt and Horror of an amaz'd Conscience.

Lastly: The Good Man has many Motives and Encouragements to support him, which the Vicious Man wants; nay, not only so, but is harass'd and dejected by quite contrary Discouragements. Affliction to the one, is the Chastisement of a kind Father; to the other, the Wounds and Infliction of an enraged and Almighty Enemy. The Fiery Trial is designed to refine and purge the one, but to destroy and consume the other. The Pain of the one, is the Preface to Eternal Rest; but that of the other, is the Preface only to a greater. Death will release the one into an Immortal Life; but it will consign the other over to a far worse and Endless Death. In a word, The Soul of the Righteous, in this Body of Pain, seems to be like a Passenger

passenger in a Ship, the Tossing of the Waves may give him some Disturbance, and make him Sea-sick ; but he is bound for the *Fortunate Islands*, infur'd by that Power that commands both Winds and Seas ; Angels are his Pilots, Hope his Anchor, Faith and Devotion his Sails ; And knowing all this, he may be content to bear the Trouble and Nauseousness of the Voyage, whatever Inconvenience he undergo, or whatever Hazards encounter him. But the Soul of the Wicked, is like a Passenger in a Tempestuous Sea, and disabled Vessel, without Pilot, Sails or Cables ; and in this Case, he would look upon it as a Happiness, if he were to suffer Shipwreck, and perish in the Waves ; but he is to be driven on a Coast inhabited by Devils, a waste and dark Desert, fertile of nothing but Flames and Sulphur. Ah, wretched Soul ! that with good Reason dreads the Shore more than the Sea. This brings me to the

3^d Thing, The Fear of a Future State. The Wicked Man is tormented with great Pain and Fear of more lasting, even to all Eternity. All the Sins of his past Life do now stare him in the Face, and the guilty Conscience starts back at the Sight. What has he done

VOL. I. with his Life? What with his Talents? Alas, all his Hopes are gone, and his Guilt is all that will go along with him into another World. What Thoughts must this Man have? *Stephen*

Acts vii. indeed *saw the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the Right-hand*

Matr. xxv of God, to welcome him with a *Well done*

21. *thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord; but to him they are eternally foreclos'd, and there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of Vengeance to come, which shall cast the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* But the Righteous who abide in Christ, have Confidence at his Appearance;

Rom. viii. *for there's no Condemnation to them*

1. *which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* The Conquest over the World and the Flesh, their rejecting of Temptation, their Works of Charity and Mercy, their Delight in the Ordinances and Service of God, and the Earnest of the Blessed Spirit of God, do abundantly assure them of a better Life; and they have frequently, even daily, stated their Accounts with God, examin'd their State, humbly bewail'd their Sins, and devoutly renounced them; and the great Business

ness is done, and not to be done upon a
 Death-bed. They have then nothing to
 do, but to say with Old *Simeon, Lord,* Luk.ii.29
now lettest thou thy Servant depart in
Peace: or with *St. Paul, I have fought* 2 Tim.iv.
a good Fight, I have finish'd my Course, 7, 8.
I have kept the Faith; henceforth there
is laid up for me a Crown of Righteous-
ness.

The End of the Third Sermon.

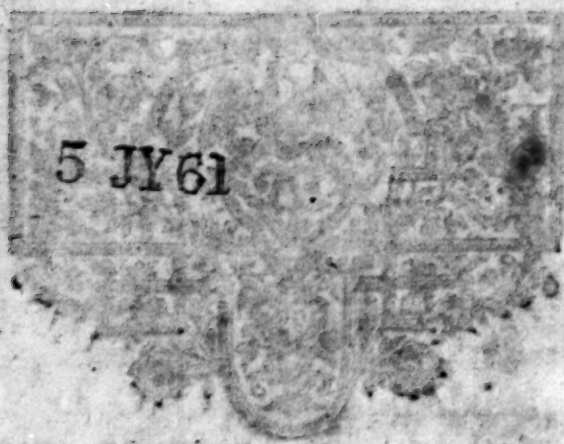


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SERMON IV.

Shewing why G o d permits so many to die Young; with a Reflexion from thence upon the Vanity of all Worldly Things.

[Preached at the Funeral of a Young Person.]

2 KINGS iv. 27.

And when she came to the Man of God to the Hill, she caught him by the Feet: but Gebazi came near to thrust her away. And the Man of God said, Let her alone; for her Soul is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.



THE Occasion of that Vol. I.
Trouble and Disorder of
Mind, which the pious
Shunamite, here in my
Text, expresses in the
most tender and moving manner ima-
ginable,

VOL. I. ginable, is related just before in very few, but very clear and lively Words. She had, for a long time, had no Child, and now despair'd of ever having any, for her Husband was become an Old Man; and though the Natural Desire which Marry'd Persons have of Children, especially when their Family is Ancient, and their Fortune Splendid, renders the want of them, a Trouble to all such in general; there was this additional Consideration, that must needs encrease it in the *Shunamite* and her Husband, That this was, on many Accounts, a very great Reproach and Disappointment to an *Israelite*. But this Evil, *G O D*, at the Entreaty of the Prophet *Elisha*, was pleas'd to remove, and to bestow upon her a Son, in Reward of that Generosity, Care and Reverence which she had often testify'd towards this Prophet. But the Pleasure this Favour of Heaven gave them was very short-liv'd; for this Child being now grown up, or well near it, (for so the Phrase *ἡδύμωρον τὸ παιδίον*, must import) fell suddenly sick and dy'd: And when the Child was grown, it fell on a Day that he went out to his Father to the Reapers. And he said unto his Father, My Head, my Head. And he said to a Lad,

²Kings iv.
18, 19, 20

a Lad, Carry him to his Mother. And Ser. IV. when he had taken him, and brought him to his Mother, he sat on her Knees till Noon, and then died.

Having told you the Cause of the *Shunamite's* Passion, in my Text, I shall take Occasion from it to treat of these two or three Things:

I. I will say something of the Wisdom of Divine Providence, which seems to most very dark and intricate in this sort of Administrations, I mean the Cutting off Young Persons in the Bud; for we seem to be at a loss, and unable to determine, either why they were Born, or why they Die so Untimely.

II. I shall, from hence, infer the Vanity of every Condition in this Life, as far as it depends upon the Things without us.

III. I shall enquire what kind of Grief may be allow'd on this and the like Occasions. And,

Ist: I am to say something upon a very dark and puzzling Part of Providence, the too early Death of Young Persons, who

VOL. I. who fall before they are well blown. We are very apt to demand, To what Purpose were they Born? To what Purpose were they endow'd with such Strength and Beauty of Body, with such excellent Dispositions, and great Capacities, and then sent into the World, only to be snatch'd out of it? So perfect and exquisite a Piece of Work to be defac'd in a Moment, so much Travail in the Birth, and so much Care and Pains in Nursing up and Educating; and all for nothing? And as we are at a loss to resolve why they are Born, so are we too, to determine why they Die. Why do they suffer Diseases, and Pain, and Death, who seem too innocent to deserve this Evil, being incapable of transgressing the Law, because incapable of understanding it? Or why are they prevented doing those great and good things, which, in all appearance, they seem Born and Qualify'd to do? What do they themselves, or what do others, reap from this so short Span of Life? They but deceive the Expectations which they raise, and wound the Bosom which they had engag'd and taken. And the Objection is somewhat the stronger, because this happens
so

so often, that it is grown into an Observation, Ser. IV.

Immodicis brevis est etas & rara Senectus.

To which Objection, which consists of many Parts, I may in General answer Two Things.

First: That the Providence of God is an Abyfs, which we cannot fathom, Rom. xi. 33.
His Judgments are unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out. Hence is that of Isa. xlv. 15.
the Prophet, *Verily thou art a God that hidest thy self.* He has wise Reasons for his Actions, though we cannot search them out; and he has often excellent Ends in his View, when we pur-blind Creatures can discover none. It does not therefore follow, if we cannot see to what End they were born, who die before they arrive at any Maturity, that therefore they were born for none; it only follows, Isa. lv. 9.
That as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are God's Ways higher than our Ways, and his Thoughts than our Thoughts. And can it be otherwise? He is Infinite, and we Finite; he is *Alpha* and *Omega*, and beholds all at once, Past, Present, and to Come; we are Creatures of small Dimensions, short Duration, and of very scanty Comprehension; we see little of what

Vol. I. what is Contemporary with us; we know neither the Beginning nor End of Things; nor is the Incomprehensibleness of Divine Providence consequently the Refuge of Fools and Sluggards, but the just and necessary Plea of modest and wise Men.

Secondly. God, as a Great Prince, rules the World by fix'd and general Laws, the Corporeal World by Corporeal Laws, the Spiritual and Rational by Moral ones; nor does he interpose or exert an Over-ruling Power, but when something worthy of G O D calls and obliges him to it. He does never suspend or obstruct the Force and Efficacy of Mechanick Nature, unless when Nature interferes with and falls short of his great and wise Ends. In a word, he works no Miracle, but when the Interest of his Glory requires it, or when 'tis to reward or encourage a strong Faith or eminent Virtue; he does not therefore remove the latent Seeds of Diseases and Death in tender Bodies; he does not fortifie the Young any more than those of riper Age, against the Venom and Infection of Distempers, or a Contagious Air, by a Miracle. If therefore we regard the Universal Laws of Nature, we are not to wonder, that the Young and

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the Adult die alike, because they are Ser.IV. equally subject to Death, and have Bodies equally Mortal and Corruptible. If we would speak Sense, we should not ask why they die, unless we could shew a just Reason why they should not; unless we could demonstrate, upon clear Grounds, that it became G o d to work a Miracle for their Preservation. And this Answer will appear still more Satisfactory, if we believe G o d infinitely Wise, as we must do, if we believe a G o d at all; for then we must conclude, that he proportions his Means to his Ends, and that his Laws are suitable and subservient to his great Designs.

Thus far to the Objection in general; but to speak to it a little more particularly and closely. As to the first Difficulty in it, which consists in this, That they who die Young, I mean far short of Manhood, seem to have been made and born to no Purpose; if I can shew, that their Birth and Death serve to excellent Purposes, that we may, and they certainly will, reap great Advantages from it; then this part of the Objection vanishes.

Let us consider then, *first*, as to others: May not the Death of such as these, have an excellent Influence upon
all

VOL. I. all who are concern'd in it, or reflect upon it? May it not suggest to us how fatal Sin is, when they see the terrible Consequences of *Adam's Sin*? For what Death is severe enough to punish the wilful and repeated Sins in Man, when the Sin of *Adam* involves the harmless Infant in the Effects of its Guilt and Punishment?

Again: Do not such Instances read Lectures to us of Death and Judgment? If none died 'till they had spun out Life to the last Period, how Confident and Presumptuous would Man grow? How boldly would he procrastinate and put off Repentance? But these Untimely Deaths tell us aloud upon what slippery Ground we stand, and how slight a Hold we have of Life. Nor is this all: How frequently does this Kind of Providence mortify us to the World, more than the strongest Reasons would be able to do? How does it regulate and restrain our vain Desires and ambitious Designs? How does it work us up to a Resignation to the Divine Will? For he that can sacrifice his Natural Affections to God, will doubtless never refuse to sacrifice any other to him. In a word, the Preacher teaches us, that *The Heart of the Wise is in the House of Mourning.* If

Ep: lcl. vii
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ever

ever our Thoughts will be wise and serious, if ever they will be just and impartial, 'tis at such a time as this; and therefore by the by, I must observe, that 'tis much to be regretted, that Pomp and Shew has jostled out Religion, even in Funerals; and that our Minds are engaged in vain Amusements, when they should be steadily and seriously fix'd upon our Latter End. Ser. IV.

2. As to the Young Persons themselves, whose early Death seems a puzzling Event; I must affirm, they are not Born in vain, they will have their proper Share in the Glory and Happiness of another Life; *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Our Lord himself hath taught us, concerning Children carry'd to him in their Parents Arms, that, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* - And if they are capable of being Members of the Kingdom of Grace, they are consequently capable of being Members of the Kingdom of Glory. The Examples of *Christ*, of the *Baptist*, and of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, do plainly evince Children proper Subjects of the Sanctifying Spirit; and our Church, both in the Office of Baptism and elsewhere, does plainly acknowledge an immediate and internal Energy Matt. xix. 14.

Vol. I. Energy of the Holy Spirit in such.

How natural is it then, from hence, to infer, That they are capable of Heaven, in whom the Spirit of Sanctification, Life, and Glory makes its Abode? And if this be so, in the case of Infants and Young Children, how much more still in those who have arriv'd, though not at Strength and Maturity of Reason, yet at many Degrees of it? And whatever we may think, Youth Understands betimes, Believes betimes, loves Good and hates Evil betimes; we discern in 'em betimes the Dawnings and Motions of excellent Principles and excellent Inclinations; and he that will not call any thing of this kind Virtue, because it falls short of the Judgment and Experience of Manhood, may as well deny Man capable of Virtue, because he can never equal that of Angels; or deny the *two Mites of the Widow* to be Charity, because they come not up to the *Talents of the Rich*. That God, who accepts those who act up to the Measures of their Fortunes, will accept those too who act up to the Measures of their Natures, to which he suits those of his Grace.

If this then be prov'd, as I think it is, That they who fall short of Manhood, do not therefore fall short of Heaven; then, certainly,

certainly we cannot say that they are Born Ser.IV.
to no Purpose: Nay, we must say, that
as to themselves they are Happy, they
seem to enjoy this peculiar Privilege, they
gain the Prize without Running, obtain
the Crown without Fighting, and are
translated into the Joys and Glories of
another Life, e'er they have scarce tasted
the Evils of this. And will not Heaven
abundantly reward the Travail of their
Birth, and the Pangs of their Death?
May I not venture to add to this, That
the Variety of Providence which we be-
hold in this Life, will contribute wonder-
fully to the Variety, the Beauty, and the
Harmony of another World? But this
is a Speculation that I dare not enter too
far into; for the first Step we make be-
yond the Bounds of Revelation, we enter
either into too dazzling a Light, or im-
penetrable Darkness.

Thus much of the first Difficulty in
the Objection; as to the other two,
which are behind, they may be resolv'd
in a Word.

'Tis demanded, Why do Children and
Young Folks Die, when they have done
no Evil? Not to mention the Fall of
Adam again, not to put Nature upon the
Wrack to extort the Acknowledgment
of Wickedness and Transgression from

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it,

VOL. I. it, e'er it is capable of understanding a Law. I answer, That the Objection supposes Death an Evil; but, on the contrary, if these Young Persons are taken away from the Evils of this present World, and put in Possession of the Good Things of *that* to come; if, thro' the Indulgence of Heaven, they are dispens'd with from passing thro' a Life of Danger and Probation, and admitted immediately into one of Security and Rest; this surely is far from being an Evil.

The last Difficulty is, Why are Youths of the most pregnant Parts, and the most promising Dispositions, prevented by an Untimely Death, from doing those Great and Good Things they appear qualified for? I answer, This at best is but guessing, not reasoning; great Parts are as capable of being the Instruments of great Evil, as of great Good to the World; and as to the Dispositions of tender Years, they are soon stifled and extinguish'd, or perverted and deprav'd: We must leave these things to God; he that contrives future things, knows best how to dispose of the present; and he that distributes to every one that is born into the World his Talents, knows best what Post, what

what Station every one is fit for, either Ser.IV.
in this, or the other World; and tho' we
may mistake when we chuse for our
selves, no one can be out of his Place
and Order for whom GOD alone chuses.
I go on to consider,

Idly, The Vanity and Emptiness of
this Life, as far as it depends upon the
Things without us. This is a Reflexion
which the Grief of the *Shunamite* na-
turally leads me to; she was, as she is
describ'd in this Chapter, a great Wo-
man, and there seem'd nothing wanting
to make her Happy, if the things of
this World could have made her so.
This we may easily gather from her
History here. She had laid Obligati-
ons upon *Elisba*, and he was willing to
have made some Acknowledgment for
them; and therefore he bid *Gehazi* enquire
of her which way he might be service-
able to her: *Say now unto her, Behold,* ^{2 Kin. iv.}
thou hast been careful for us with all this ^{13.}
Care; What is to be done for thee?
Wouldst thou be spoken for to the King,
or to the Captain of the Host? To this
she answer'd, *I dwell among mine own*
People; which was in effect to say, in
her Husband's Name and her own, Our
Fortune is too big to need any Acces-
sion;

VOL. I. sion; Grants or Preferments from the Prince would be but a Burden, not a Benefit to us; nor do we need Protection from the Captain of the Host; the Greatness of our Family, the Number of our Friends and Dependants, are as much Security as we desire. But did all this make 'em Happy? No; there was something yet wanting, without which this ample Fortune had very little Gust and Pleasure in it; they *had no Child*, none to perpetuate their Name, none to inherit their Fortune, none to reap the Fruit of their good Conduct and Virtue, none in whom their Image and their Honour might survive when they were dead; but their Estate was to pass, it may be, to a Fool or to a Stranger; nay, it may be to an Enemy to their very Persons and Reputations; their Name was to be extinguish'd in *Israel*, and in a Moment they and their Glory to be converted into Rottenness and Dust. 'Tis not therefore to be doubted but that they often made that uneasy Reflexion, which *Solomon* thought so natural and unavoidable in this Case, *Yea, I hated all my Labour* **Eccles. ii. 18, 19.** *which I had taken under the Sun, because I should leave it unto the Man that shall be after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a Wise Man or a Fool?* This was

a great Evil; but it pleas'd God to gratify Ser. IV. the *Sbunamite*, even when she was past the Expectation of it, and according to Human Judgment, almost a Possibility of it, and to supply this only Want, and bestow upon her a Child.

Now, no doubt on't, they were for a little while much transported; they promis'd themselves this Child would be to them little short of what *Isaac* was to *Abraham*, and they entertain'd themselves with a long and agreeable Prospect of very remote Blessings; but, alas! this Satisfaction was often mix'd with very different Passions; they now felt Cares and Fears which they never knew before; every the least Disorder in the Body of this only Child, any thing in him that did betray either Defect, or ill Disposition in his Mind, gave them unspeakable Trouble. If there were nothing of this, if the Gift of Heaven were so compleat, that there was no want either of Vigour in his Body, or Vivacity in his Mind; yet they could not be ignorant to how many Accidents this single Life was liable, and how slight a Matter could extinguish it; and therefore whether any Evil did actually befall him or not, the fond Parents did often in vain fear all, because all might befall him. But if they were free

VOL. I. even from this, which is very rare in the like Circumstances, yet we see how in a Moment their Hopes were all dash'd, and their Contentment quite destroy'd by a sudden and surprizing Death; so that we plainly see, the Life of a Child is too weak a Foundation to support any considerable Happiness, or build any great Projects on.

I have dwelt upon one Instance of Human Vanity because my Text limits me to it; and the Sum is, we are uneasy both with Children and without, under the Want of them, and under the Loss of them. Desires, Fears, Cares, Sorrows, take up a great part of Life; Satisfaction and Security a very little one: And as it is with reference to Children, so is it with reference to all the other things of this Life which we call Good; the things themselves are uncertain and empty, and if they were not, they are so distributed by G O D, that we can never deriye any true, compleat, or certain Happiness from them. G O D has given something to every one, but all things to no one; enough to every one to render Life tolerable, enough to none to make it happy. No State so full, that there is not something to desire; nor so secure, but that there is much to fear.

From

From all this put together, we cannot Ser.IV.
but infer one plain Lesson, namely, That 
all our Projects, which are terminated up-
on Worldly things, are vain and foolish;
we raise mighty Buildings upon the Sand,
which not only mighty Storms and Tem-
pests, but every little Gust of Wind can
overthrow; nay, the very Weight of the
Edifice and the Looseness and Hollownes
of the Foundation, makes it sink of it self.
The Psalmist observes of him *that joins*
House to House, and lays Field to Field,
Man walketh in a vain Shew, surely Psalm
he is disquieted in vain; he heapeth up xxxix.6,
Riches, and knoweth not who shall gather
them. And if Death can prove Avarice
Vanity, it may as easily prove Ambition
and Lust so too; for in a Moment, in
the midst of deep Counsels and well-
form'd Interests, and upon the very
brink of Enjoyment, an irresistible Sen-
tence passes upon the poor Creature, and
he returns again to his Dust, and *all his*
Thoughts perish.

What Folly then, what Madness is it to
set our Hearts upon these Outward things,
and hunt after Happiness where it is not
to be found, and at the same time to flight
Religion? When, would we consider things
seriously and impartially, we should soon
conclude, that this were our Wisdom as

VOL. I. well as Duty; 'tis the great Thing we need, among the many Trials and Troubles of this Life, and 'tis the only thing that will never deceive us. **G O D** never changes nor dies; good Works never perish, their Memorial remains for ever both with **G O D** and Man too. Virtue never breeds Discontent or Repentance; a Wise, Holy, and Enlighten'd Mind, has a Heaven always in its View, and therefore is always cheered by some Rays and Emanations of it; 'tis rais'd above Crosses and Disappointments, above Changes and Revolutions, above the Malice and Injustice of Factions, above the Decays and Diseases of the Body, and above the Death of the dearest Children, or, if that be more, the dearest Friends.

I come, *Lastly*, to make some Enquiry what kind of Grief may be allow'd to such as are nearly Related, on such Occasions as this.

Religion does not destroy Nature, but raise and refine it; it does not extirpate our Passions, but regulate and govern 'em. We may rejoyce and weep; for it is written, *Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep with them that weep.* But **Rom. xii.** 15. certainly if they did ill, we should not be allow'd, much less injoynd to keep them

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Company in it. We may then rejoyce **Ser. IV.**
 and weep; but we must do both as be-
 comes those who are thoroughly perswad-
 ed of the Emptiness and Shortness of this
 Life, and of the Certainty, Excellence,
 and Eternity of another. Thus the *Apo-*
stle exhorts the *Corinthians* that *they that*
weep, be as tho' they wept not; and they
that rejoyce, as tho' they rejoyced not; for
the Fashion of this World passeth away.
 And again in another *Epistle*, that ye
 Sorrow not even as others which have
 no Hope. We may mourn, be afflict-
 ed and griev'd, but not so as to injure
 either our Health or Reason; not so as
 to be transported either into Words or
 Actions inconsistent with our Virtue or
 our Faith; not so, finally, as to render
 our selves incapable of doing our Duty
 either to God or Man. These are the
 Bounds that we must set our Sorrows;
 we must not run either into one Extreme
 or other; we must not skreen extravagant
 and unreasonable Passions, under the Pre-
 tence of Human Frailty; nor defend an
 unnatural Insensibility, under a Pretence
 of Christianity. Now if there be any
 Cause big enough to deserve and justify
 this Passion, 'tis certainly the loss of
 those whom either their Worth or
 Friendship, or Nearness of Relation, has
 indear-

1 Cor. vii.
30, 31.

1 Thess.
iv. 13.

VOL. I. indeared to us. Thus the Saints of God made great Lamentation for St. *Stephen*; and their Tears and Sorrows at the very Apprehension of St. *Paul's* Imprisonment and Death, melted that great Apostle into a Softness, not often equalled, and seldom, I believe, outdone, *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine Heart?*
 Acts xxi. 13. Our Saviour himself was dissolved into Groans and Tears, either out of Tenderness for weeping *Martha* and *Mary*, or Friendship for departed *Lazarus*.
 John xi. 35. The Passion of *David*, upon the Fall of *Jonathan*, could not be express'd by any thing but the Swellings and Elevation of Sacred Poetry; the Tide of Grief rise too high to be contain'd within the Banks of common Language. As to Relations, there needs neither Reason nor Example to legitimate Grief here: Nature must be torn up by the Roots e'er it can be excluded. I think it therefore needless to mind you either of *Jacob's* Mourning for *Joseph*, or *David's* for *Absalom*; but I cannot pass over the *Shunamite's* for her Son, in my Text:
 Gen. xxxvii. 34. 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Her Passion, for some time, over-power'd her Strength, her Grief suppress'd her Spirits, and she was not able for a while, to give it vent; and when she did, 'twas in such Sense and Language, as dis-

disorder'd, afflicted Nature dictated; *Did Ser. IV.*
I desire a Son of my Lord? Did I not say,
Do not deceive me? But after this little
Shock, her whole Conduct shew'd that
her Judgment remain'd firm and steady,
and her Faith did far out-vie her Passion;
she had reason'd well with her self, that
her Son was the Son of a Miracle, ra-
ther than of Nature; she knew she
ow'd him entirely to the Favour of Hea-
ven, and the Power of *Elisba's* Prayers;
and therefore she did not doubt, but
what at first gave him, could again re-
store him. This made her, amidst all the
Troubles of her Soul, steer her Course
directly to Mount *Carmel*; and this made
her unalterably resolv'd not to leave him,
As the Lord liveth, and as thy Soul liv-
eth, I will not leave thee.

Here I might dismiss this Point, but that
I cannot forbear observing to you, the
Preposterousness and Absurdities of Hu-
man Passions. How tenderly do Pa-
rents deplore the Death of a beloved,
Promising Child, while they have no
Tears, no Passion at all for the wretched
Miscarriages and Debaucheries of a Vi-
cious one? How are they disturb'd and
afflicted intolerably when he falls into a
Sickness, but little mov'd when he falls
into Sin? As if Vice were less prejudi-
cial

VOL. I. cial to him, and less loathsome than a
 ~~~~~ Disease, and Damnation less dreadful  
 than Death. Surely such Parents have  
 no very clear Notions of a Judgment to  
 come, or are as much Strangers to true  
 Faith, as their unhappy Children to  
 Virtue; surely they have no Sense of  
 any other Happiness or Misery, than  
 what consists in Health and a good  
 Estate, and therefore extend their Con-  
 cern for their Children no farther.

The Sum of all is, That we are to  
 revere and admire that Providence which  
 we cannot fathom, and expect from the  
 Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God,  
 that Satisfaction which we could never  
 otherwise derive from our Reason.

That the World is a transitory, empty,  
 and uncertain Thing, too weak to sus-  
 tain the Weight of any true or great  
 Happiness; consequently that we are  
 to set bounds to our Passions for it, and  
 the Things of it; and to make it the  
 great Business and aim of Life to secure  
 an Eternity, and to form and train up  
 our Children in the same Principles, and  
 the same Designs.

*The End of the Fourth Sermon.*

S E R.



## SERMON V.

Shewing what Concern Christianity allows us to testify at the Loss of our Relations and Children ; with the Case of those consider'd who die Infants.

[ Preach'd at the Funeral of a Daughter of Sir Thomas Davall, who dy'd at Ten Years of Age. ]

I THESS. iv. 13.

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not even as others which have no Hope.*



O the great Duties which the Apostle exhorts us to, here in this Chapter, such as Purity or Chastity, *ver. 3,* 4, 5. Justice, *ver. 6.* Charity and Brotherly Love, *ver. 9.* Peaceableness,

VOL. I.



VOL. I. ablenefs, *ver.* 11, he subjoins in my Text,  
 ~~~~~ Moderation of our Sorrow for the Dead;  
 from whence we may conclude the Im-
 portance of the Duty, not only our own
 Comfort and Happiness, but also the
 Honour of Christianity being interested
 in it. That we may therefore, on this and
 such-like Occasions, behave our-selves as
 becomes our Profession, I will discourse,
 from these Words, of Three Things.

I. What Grief may be here allow'd,
 as consistent with the Principles of
 Christianity.

II. What Ground there is here of
 Comfort.

III. What proper Use is to be made of
 this or the like Providences.

I. What Grief, &c. Among the
 Heathens, who pretended most to Rea-
 son and Philosophy, some condemn-
 ed all Passions in general; because they
 did conceive, that the Turbulency and
 Torment of Passion, was inconsistent
 with that Calm and Traquillity of
 Mind with which they thought a Man
 truly Wise ought to be possess'd. But in
 this they were guilty of Two Mistakes;
 The

The First was, That they talk'd too pre-Ser. V.
sumptuously and Romantickly of the Happiness of Man, like Men little vers'd in the Frailties of Human Nature, and the Miseries of this Mortal State, while they conceiv'd it to consist in such a Calm as should not have one Breath, one Gust to disorder or disturb it; such was the foolish Rant of *Seneca*, when he talk'd of finding the Stability of Good join'd with the Frailty of Man: There needs no Refutation of this Fancy, but the common Sense and Experience of Mankind. The other Mistake is, That they judg'd all Passions turbulent and tormenting, and destructive and pernicious to the Peace and Serenity of the Mind of Man. 'Tis not Passion, but the Excess of it, that tortures the Mind, that vexes and destroys the Happiness of Man.

There were therefore another sort of Philosophers, who talk'd more consonant to our State and Nature, and these did not condemn Passion in general, but the Excess of it; they did not conceive, that the Happiness of Man did consist in Apathy or Insensibleness, but in the Mediocrity of our Passions.

But *Lactantius*, an early and eloquent Father of the Church, giving us
the

VOL. I. the Sense of the Christian Philosophy in this Point, rejects both these Opinions, and tells us plainly, *Christiana Disciplina neque excindit Affectus, neque Mediocritatem indistincte precipit, sed rectum eorum usum monstrat, modo intensiorem, modo remissiorem, pro rei dignitate*: Christian Philosophy, saith he, doth neither command utterly to exterminate our Passions, nor yet enjoyn us absolutely, or without any Distinction, the reducing 'em to a Mediocrity; but only teaches us to make a right Use of them, allowing 'em to be sometimes more intense, sometimes more remis, according to the Dignity and Importance of the Occasion. Here then, we have the Sense of the Christian Religion in this Matter, briefly and soundly deliver'd; which I'll reduce to these two or three Propositions.

- First*: That Christianity does not root out, but allow of our Passions; this is plain, in that it looks upon it to be a Character of the worst of Men to
- Rom. i. be without *Natural Affection*. And in
31. that it commands us to *Rejoyce, with*
Rom, xii. *them that do Rejoyce*; and *Weep with*
15. *them that Weep*. The Example of our Saviour himself justifies this Doctrine, whom we often read of melted into the

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the same Sorrows to which we are sub-^{Ser. W}
 ject. When he drew nigh to *Jeru-*
salem, he could not forbear bemoaning
 the Desolation of it: *And when he was* ^{Luke xix.}
come near, he beheld the City, and wept ^{41.}
over it. Nor let us think that nothing
 less than the Extermination of a Nation,
 or the utter Excision of a Populous City,
 the Metropolis of his Native Country,
 was a Subject big enough to raise his
 Grief; he was mov'd to the same Ten-
 derness, and soften'd to the same Passion,
 by the Death of *Lazarus*, and Mourn-
 ing of *Martha* and *Mary*; for first *Je-*
sus *groaned*; a Manly Sorrow, or the
 beginnings of it; and then the Tide
 rose higher, and *Jesus* *wept.* Surely ^{John xi.}
 then, this our Gracious and Compassio- ^{35.}
 nate Master will never condemn a tender
 Frame of Spirit which is so like his
 own; he can never condemn the La-
 mentations of *Ramah*, the Mournings of ^{Jer. xxxi.}
Rachel *for her Children*; he cannot dis- ^{15.}
 approve of the Tenderness of *Hagar*,
 when she was not able to bear the Mife-
 ry of her young Child, but when *she*
 had *cast it under one of the Shrubs, went* ^{Gen xxi.}
and sat her down over-against him a good ^{15, 16.}
way off, as it were a Bow-shot; for she
said, Let me not see the Death of the Child.
And she sat over-against him, and lift up
 H her

VOL. I. *her Voice and wept.* He cannot disapprove of the Trouble of the pious *Shunammite*, for that Child who *cried, My Head, my Head; and sat on his Mother's Knees till Noon, and then died.* This is the first part of the Christian Doctrine concerning Passions: It doth allow of them, particularly of the Sorrow in my Text.

2 Kings iv
19, 20.

Secondly: Christianity teaches us to make a right Use of our Passions, *i. e.* that they should be Aids and Assistances to us in all the great Works of Virtue. Thus, for instance, we may make use of our Fear to restrain us from Sin; of our Natural Affection for our Wives and Children, to render us more Industrious and Watchful to procure their true Good; Of the Tenderness and Compassion of an excellent Temper, to animate and quicken us in the great Works of Charity; and finally, of the Grief, which the Pain or Death of our dear Friends, or dear Children give us, to encrease our Contempt of this World, and our Desire of a better. But of this anon.

Thirdly: Christianity teaches us, as to the Measures and Degrees of our Passion, that it is to be rais'd or abated according to the Moment or Value of that, which is the Subject or Occasion of

of it. Thus should our Love of God Ser. V. be the most ardent Love, because he is the sovereign Good: Thus should our Sorrow for Sin be the most pungent and lasting Sorrow, because 'tis the greatest and worst of Evils. If we come to Worldly things, our Trouble may be proportion'd to the Nature of our Loss, as our Love or Joy may be to the intrinsic Value of the Treasures and Blessings we are possess'd of. Friends therefore and Relations being the most dear and valuable Possessions of this World, 'tis but reasonable that we should be allow'd to express our own Passion, and adorn their Memory by a just and decent Grief. Thus Joseph bury'd his Father with a true and solemn Grief: *And they came Gen. l. 10. to the Tbreſſing-floor of Arad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very ſore Lamentation: And he made a Mourning for his Father ſeven Days.* And thus, devout Men carried Stephen to his Burial, and made great Lamentation over him. Acts viii. 2. And therefore I wonder not at the Groans of a Father, or the Lamentations of a Mother, in the Agonies of a dying, or o'er the Corps of a dead Child; *This is Bone of our Gen. ii. Bones, and Fleſh of our Fleſh;* this is 23. the Pledge and Fruit of the Parents

VOL. I. Love; this is the Diversion of their Travails, and the Reward of their Cares; on this their Joys and Hopes are in a great measure built. Nor doth the difference of Years vary the Matter here much; there is something in the Budding of Childhood, as well as in the Maturity of Youth, that takes and delights the Parents: In the one there is Innocence, and in the other Virtue; in the one there's the Smile and Sweetness of a Blossom, in the other the Delicousness and Usefulness of Fruit; the one adds Fondness and Tenderneſs, the other Esteem and Value to our Love.

But after all, tho' we may have the Affections of Men, we muſt too have the Faith of Chriſtians: We are allow'd the Weakneſs and Frailties of Human Nature, but we muſt regulate and ſupport them by the Principles of our Divine Inſtitution: We may ſigh, we may weep at the Funeral, we may grieve at the Loſs of a dear and promiſing Child; but not as *Pagans*, as others which have no Hope. Our Sorrow muſt not tranſport us beyond our Duty; *i. e.* we muſt put ſuch Bounds to it as may ſufficiently teſtify, That we do not forget the Subjection and Obedience we owe to the Divine Will, nor the great Article

cle of our Faith, the Resurrection and a Ser. V.
Life to come. Which brings me to the

II^d Thing, The ground we have here
of Comfort. Before the publishing of
the Gospel, *i. e.* before *Life and Immor-* 2 Tim. ii.
tality were brought to Light, it was
10.
thought a good Argument against the
Fear of Death; or immoderate Sorrow
for the Dead, that it was not certain
whether Death were a Good or an Evil.
What Influence then ought an Assu-
rance, that Death to the Deceas'd is
not only a Good, but the greatest
Good, have upon us? What a Cordial
ought it to be to the Afflicted Mind,
what an Alleviation of its Sorrow? And
this is the Case here: For what can we
mean else, when we say that the Child
is dead, but only this, She is deliver'd
from the Pains of the Body, and from
the Frailties and Corruptions of it too;
she is deliver'd from the Temptations of
the World, and from the Wiles and
Devices of the Devil: Her Warfare is
accomplish'd without Hazard, and her
Race is run without the Toil and Pa-
tience which encreasing Years would
have requir'd. She is taken away in-
deed from tender Parents, but she is

VOL. I. gone to *the Father of Spirits, and to the gracious Mediator of the New Covenant.* She is taken away from the Affluence and Delights of a plentiful Fortune; Heb. ii. but she is gone to *Mount Sion, to the 22, Ec. City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, and to the general Assembly of the First-born, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, and to the Joys and Pleasures of them all.* Is this a State to be bewail'd? Is this a proper Subject of a Settled and Lasting Grief?

If any Body should demand how I come to pronounce so peremptorily of her State, the Answer is very easy: Our Saviour pronounces concerning the Innocent Children, *That of such is the Kingdom of God:* He declares their Innocence such, that the Imitation of it would qualify the Adult or Full-grown for Heaven. And how can we think otherwise? Can we imagine, that God was more displeas'd with the single Sin of the First *Adam*, than pleas'd with the unspotted Life of the Second? That he was more provok'd by the Fall of the one, than he was pleas'd with the Obedience of the other, even unto Death? Can we imagine, that the Influence of *Adam's* Transgression should be extended

extended wider and farther, than that *Ser. V.*
of the Merit of the Blessed *Jesus*? that
the one should be more swift and fatal
to Destroy, than the other to Redeem
or Save? Or can we fancy that there
are some Conditions necessary on the
Child's part, to render it capable of the
Benefits of Christ's Passion, and yet
think none necessary to render it liable
to the Evil Effects of *Adam's* Transgres-
sion? He that can fancy any thing of
this kind, contradicts *St. Paul* in his
whole 5th Chapter to the *Romans*,
where he declares all along, That the
Righteousness of *Jesus* operates more
powerfully to the Salvation, than the
Sin of *Adam* can to the Destruction of
Mankind: And he entertains very un-
worthy Notions of the Divine Goodness,
and represents *G o d* quite contrary to
what he has done himself, more willing
and forward to destroy than save.

But I need insist no longer on this Point,
the Matter is beyond question here:
This Child was Partaker of the Laver of
Regeneration, and the White Robe of
her Baptism remain'd yet unstain'd, un-
spotted; she was admitted into the Holy
Church of Christ, and incorporated into
his Body, and no voluntary Wickedness
had yet divided her from it, or render'd

VOL. I. her a Putrid or Wither'd Member.

Here then is a solid Ground of Comfort; she is now Happy, and at the Day of the Resurrection shall be of that Number, which our Lord will bring with him:

1 Theff. iv For *the Dead in Christ shall rise first:*

16. And if you unfeignedly endeavour to cloath your selves with the Simplicity, Humility, and Innocence of Children, you'll be of that Number too; or if you are then living in the Flesh, *you shall be*

--Ver. 17. *caught up in the Clouds to meet our Lord,* and then you shall be divided no more for ever; *for there will be no more Death.*

Rev. xxi.

4.

Ah, how delightful are these Thoughts! We love Life; we shall have Eternal Life: We love the Body; we shall be cloath'd with it again, but a perfect, a glorify'd One: We desire to enjoy one another; we shall do so for ever. And can you imagine, that it will be any Diminution of our Happiness or our Glory in another Life, that we have pass'd to it through a Vale of Misery, and the dark Porches of the Grave? No sure, it will be an infinite Accession to it. With what Pleasure shall we, to one another, tell o'er our Grievs and Hazards, our Fears and Doubts, our Loves and Hopes? With what Delight shall we then, mounted to the Top of all our

Wishes,

Wishes, look back upon the many tedious Ser. V.
ous Steps that we have made, upon the
many Difficulties we have gone through,
upon the many Storms and Dangers we
have escap'd? With what Surprise and Ec-
stasie shall we discern our selves rais'd, not
only above our Fears, but even Hopes
and Wishes too, and instated in a God-
like Happiness and Security? And with
what Wonder, lastly, shall we survey
all the Mysterious Paths of the Divine
Providence? Ah, how short, how infi-
nitely short of this is any thing we can
imagine! What is the Pleasure of a
Traveller to this, who being return'd
to his Country and his Home, and pos-
sess'd of the Honour and Plenty of both,
doth, at his Ease, relate the Sands, the
Seas, the Desarts he has pass'd, the Pi-
rates and the Robbers he has escap'd,
and all the various Scenes of Danger
and of Difficulty he has gone through!
How short, how infinitely short of this,
is the mighty Joy of one rais'd from a
Dungeon to a Throne! When he looks
back on Defeats and Flights, on Want,
and Reproach, and Fear and Confine-
ment; the Falshood of Friends, and the
Violence of Enemies; the Insolence of
the Prosperous, and the Cowardice of
the Mean; long Sieges, tedious March-
es,

Worries, bloody and doubtful Fights, and at length sees all these Storms and Tempests blown over, his Day bright, his Sky serene, his Throne firm, and his Glory double, by his Sufferings: Infinitely short is all this of the Joy and Triumph of Victorious Christians after the Resurrection.

By this time I could well nigh persuade my self, that you have almost forgot your Sorrow, and are intent upon the *Joy that is set before us*; you have exchanged the Thoughts of a Grave, for those of a Heaven; and instead of Troubles and Sorrows, are now meditating upon Joys and Triumphs; and every one is ready to say within himself, *Blessed is he who shall be Partaker of such a Resurrection!* Well is that Life spent, which secures to us such an Eternity! Ah, how mean are all the Projects that aim not at this! How foolish and fruitless are all the Labours that end not here! Ah, what are these Possessions here Below, compar'd with those Above! Ah, how short, how uncertain is the Period of Life! O that I could make sure of Eternity! This puts me in mind of the

Heb. xii.

2.

Rev. xx.

6.

Sero V.

the Thing, The Use that is to be made of this or the like Providence. This is manifold to Parents: *1st*, It instructs them, that they should not lay too great a Stress, either of Joy or Hope, upon these slight Foundations, I mean Children; nor be overflowed by too violent a Grief for the Loss of them; but, as the Apostle speaks concerning Wives, and other the Possessions of this Life, that our Delight in them should not be too big, nor too confident, nor our Sorrow too passionate and ungovernable, when they are taken from us; but such as becomes those who have a proper sense of the Shortness and Uncertainty of all Things below Heaven. The very same, upon the same ground, is good Advice concerning our Children: *But this I say, Brethren, the Time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none. Where we may add, And they that have Children, be as though they had none. And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not; and they that buy, as though they possess'd not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it: for the Fashion of this World passeth away.*

1 Cor. vii.

29.

Ver. 30,

31.

2dly:

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2dly: It teaches us, That we should be extremely diligent in training up our Children; I mean, as soon as they are capable of being instructed in the Nature of Religion; that if they die before us, they may die in Christ; and we, in their Death, may not want the comfortable Support, which the Expectation of meeting them again in the Joys of the Resurrection will afford us.

But as a great Part here are Young People, I will conclude with an Address to them. This early Death puts you in mind, upon what uncertain Grounds you stand; the Scythe of Death stays not always till the Harvest be ripe, but promiscuously mows down the Young with the Old; therefore your first and great Care should be, to remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth. Venture not to give up your Youth to Vanity and Folly, upon Presumption of dedicating your Age to Repentance and Religion; for if this were a Rational and Just Design in itself, yet is it to you a very unsafe and doubtful one; for which way can you ensure Life, or on what Ground can you confide on the Morrow? *Boast not of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

Prov.
xxvii. 1.

I know

I know with what Objections these Ser. V. kind of Exhortations are wont to be encountred by the Youthful: Come, say they, this is our Spring, Let us enjoy ourselves whilst we have Time and Vigour; Religion looks too grave and formal for these Years: We shall have Time enough to be dull and melancholy: Come on then, Let us enjoy ourselves as becomes our Youth, *this is our Portion, and our Lot is this:* And whatever they who have now out-liv'd themselves, whose Blood is sour, and Spirits low, may now gravely talk against these Things; they too, when Time was, admir'd what they now would have us despise as Vanity, and committed themselves what they now condemn in us. In answer to this, Let us pass over the Briskness and the Flourish, and examine the Sense and Reason of this sort of Talk. The Substance of it may be reduc'd to Three Heads.

Wisd. ii.

9.

1st: Youth is the Season of Pleasure, *i. e.* Sin and Folly; Inclination and Opportunity conspire to invite you to it, therefore you indulge it. What a strange Argument is this! Is there any Period of our Life, from our Cradle almost to our Coffin, I mean, from the Moment we arrive at the Use of Reason, to our Grave, wherein

Vol. I. wherein some Sin or other is not in Season? May not Manhood defend Ambition, and Old Age Covetousness, by the same Argument, which you do your sinful Pleasures? If Inclination to a Folly would justify our Commission of it, in which Part of Life should we begin to be Wise and Virtuous? 'Twill be hard to find the Time, wherein we shall have no Inclination to any Sin or Folly, or rather, if this be so, who can be Guilty? The Adulterer will impute his Uncleanness to the *Impetus* of his Lust; the Murderer, his Bloodshed, to the Violence of his Rage; *i. e.* each of them their Sins to the Strength of their Inclination; and if your Argument be good, they will be innocent. But do not deceive yourselves, then is your Obedience, as most acceptable to God, so most indispensable in itself, when you lie under Temptations to Sin; and Heaven is propos'd as a Reward, not of following, but conquering your Inclinations.

The 2^d Part of the Objection is, That Religion doth not look very graceful in Young Years. This I could never well understand. If they be so foolish as to think Religion consists in Sour Faces, or an Affected Moroseness and Sullenness, or

or in Stupidity and Melancholy, I must Ser. V.
 confess, they have little Reason to be
 fond of it; for this becomes no Age,
 and much less the more Verdant one.
 But if, by Religion, they Understand De-
 votion towards G O D, Reverence to-
 wards their Parents and Superiors, Tem-
 perance and Chastity in themselves, and
 such-like Virtues; I must needs say, no-
 thing can appear to me more great and
 lovely than Religion in Youth. What
 can better become those, who possess the
 Gifts of Nature in their Perfection, than
 Gratitude to the G O D of Nature?
 What can be a greater Glory to the
 Young, than Obedience to Parents, and
 Reverence to their Elders and Superiors?
 What does more preserve, or better be-
 come Strength, than Sobriety and Tem-
 perance? What is a more charming or
 a more lasting Ornament to Beauty, than
 Modesty and Chastity?

After all this, 'tis a vain Thing to
 comfort yourselves with saying, that
 the Grave and Wise, when they had
 the same Inclinations you now have,
 did, as you do, indulge and gratifie
 them. For, 1st, This is not general-
 ly true: And 2dly, The less they did
 it, the more were they honour'd and
 belov'd; But 3dly, If they did, 'tis cer-
 tain,

VOL. I. tain, that they have utterly condemn'd it, and repented of it. And is it not strangely absurd, that you should propose to yourselves nothing in the Lives of the Wise and Virtuous, but their Frailties and Errors, for your Example? That you should pitch upon that only for your Choice and Imitation, which all the Wise and Good detest and bemoan as their Sin and Shame, and think it their highest Wisdom to do so?

To conclude all; If thou *Rejoyce, O Young Man* in thy Youth, Sensually and Luxuriously; if *thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth*, Viciously and Intemperately; if thou *walk in the ways of thy Heart*, and in the sight of thine Eyes, after a Wandring Lust, or Sinful Vanity: *know that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.*

Ecclef. xi.
9.

The End of the Fifth Sermon.

5 JY61



S E R-



SERMON VI.

The Duty of Submission to the Will of God, particularly in respect of Death, Explain'd and Inforced.

M A T T H. xxvi. 39.

O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.



CHRIST is our great Ex-
 ample, both in his Life
 and Death; and both in
 the one and the other, his
 great Business was, to pay
 an entire Obedience to the Will of his
 Father. With this Purpose he enter'd
 into the World; *Then said I, Lo, I come* H.b. x. 7.
 I (In

VOL. I.

VOL. I. (*In the Volume of the Book it is written of me*) to do thy Will, O God. Thus he

John vi. tells the Jews, For I came down from
38. Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me. And as he

came into the World on this Design, so did he punctually, constantly and chearfully pursue and execute it, through the

John iv. Course of his whole Life. My Meat
34. is to do the Will of him that sent me, and

Joh. v. 30. to finish his Work. I can of my own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my Judgment is just; because I seek not mine own Will, but the Will of the Father

John viii. which hath sent me. And I seek not mine
50. own Glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Well therefore might our Saviour,

when he had well nigh finish'd the Active Part of Life, and was ready to be offer'd up, address himself to his Father with great Assurance and Satisfaction, in the manner he does: I have glorify'd thee on

John xvii. the Earth: I have finished the Work
4. 5. which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was. And as he liv'd,

so he dy'd; nay, the last Act of his Obedience was the most absolute and consummate, and is so accounted by St. Paul, Phil. ii. In this he triumph'd

over

over even his Natural Affections, re-Ser. VI.
nounced and overcame the Love of Life
and Ease, and voluntarily submitted to
Pain, and Reproach, and Death, that he
might accomplish the Will of God, for
which he came into the World: He be-
held the melancholy Scene indeed with
Sadness and Amazement; but resolv'd
however not to decline it: Nature in-
deed startled at the View, but Grace and
Faith press'd resolutely on; and the firm
and vehement Desire he had of doing
the Will of his Father, vanquish'd and
overcame whatever Inclinations, or ra-
ther sudden Motions, Human Nature
rais'd in him. *O my Father, if it be
possible, let this Cup pass from me: ne-
vertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

I will consider the Words no farther,
as they directly and immediately relate
to Christ, but only as they are applica-
ble to Christians, *i. e.* I shall shew you
how we are to copy out this Example.

Three Things we are here then taught:

I. There may be in the best Men a
Natural Reluctancy and Aversion
to Death, *If it be possible, let this
Cup pass from me.*

II. That

VOL. I.

II. That we must overcome these Natural Inclinations to Life, by Self-resignation, and an entire Submission of all our Desires to the Will of God: *Not as I will, &c.*

III. If this Sort of Submission be necessary, even in the Case of Death it self, much more in all other Cases.

I. That there may be in the best Men a natural Reluctancy and Aversion to Death. There is in the best, the Outward and the Inward Man, the Natural and the Spiritual Man; and accordingly there will be in the best, upon the Approaches of Death, the Infirmities of Nature, as well as the Strength of Grace; the Struglings of the one, as well as the Resolution and Consolation of the other. Thus it was in *David*, there was Human Infirmary, as well as Faith,

Psa. lxxiii

26.

My Flesh and my Heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever. And it is exceeding well in us, if we can come up to this; 'tis very well if our Fears do not flow as well from the Littleness of our Faith, as the Weakness of our Nature. Thus

Matt. xiv.

30.

it was with *St. Peter*, *When he began to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me; and there-*

therefore receiv'd from our Lord that just Ser. VI. Reproof, *O thou of little Faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Nay, not St. Peter only, but all the Disciples together, express'd the like Fear, upon the like Occasion; for, apprehending themselves in Danger to be sunk in a Storm, *They came* Matt. viii 25. *unto our Saviour, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.* And thus it must be with all Men, *For no Man* Eph. v. 29. *(as the Apostle speaks) ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.* But in the generality of Christians, I mean those who are truly such, their Minds have very often, not only the Reluctances and Aversions of Nature to struggle with on a Death-bed, but Doubts and Scruples of their own too. Sometimes Faith is weak, and the Belief of the Soul's Immortality, and the Resurrection of the Body, is not void of sudden and short Doubts and Fears. Sometimes our Knowledge is imperfect and obscure, and our Notions of the Covenant of Grace not so full and clear as they ought to be; and sometimes, finally, the Guilt of our Unregenerate State, and the Falls and Defects of a Regenerate one, do upon a Death-bed Reflexion create no small Anxiety; for now we seem to have a clearer View of the Pu-

VOL. I. rity of God, and the Deformity of Sin, than we ever before had. Now, tho' Faith do finally surmount these Difficulties, and calm and allay these Disturbances of the Mind, yet it does not either so quickly or so perfectly, but that the Tranquillity of the Mind is hereby somewhat clouded and over-cast, and the Satisfaction it should have in Death very much abated.

II. We must overcome our Fear of Death, and Love of Life, by an entire Submission and Resignation of our selves and all our Inclinations to the Will of God. Man on his Bed of Death, is like *St. Paul's Ship, He is fallen into a Place where two Seas meet, Time and Eternity; and if then, whilst the hinder-part, the Body, be broken with the Violence of the Waves, the fore part, the Soul, rest by Faith fix'd and unmoveable in Eternity, that Man dies well.* He dies well, whose Soul, in the afflicted, harass'd Body, is, like *Goshen*, in the Land of *Egypt*, chearful and lightsome in it self, tho' Darkness dwell upon the Face of all things round about it; he dies well, who puts off his Body, as he would do his Cloaths when he goes to Rest; he dies well, who casts off his Worldly Interests

and

Act. xxvii
41.

and Affections, as *Elijah* did his Mantle, Ser. VI. when he ascended, and makes Fire and Whirlwind, the Pain and Agonies which assault the Body, carry the Soul up to its Heaven, and to its Rest, In one word, he dies well, who, when he comes to die, can be content to do so; which no Man can ever be, unless his Faith discover within Ken a blessed State, and Divine Love, and an humbly assur'd Hope waft him, like Sails, o'er Waves and Billows, to that happy Shore; unless Faith, Love and Hope bring him to shelter in the Storm of Death, under the Almighty's Two Wings, his Power and Goodness.

Would you attain to this pitch of Christianity? Would you be able to die thus serenely, thus Christianly? Then practise this great Rule in your Life, that you may be perfect in it in Death, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* This is the Sum and Perfection of Religion, what the Heathen called *Ἐπίθεσις Θεῷ*, to comply with the Will of God; and in this consists all Irreligion, that it is an Opposition to the Divine Will. This is the great Character of Angels above, that *they do his Pleasure*; this was the Character of Christians here below, and it ought to be of every Christian, that they not only do it, but suffer it too. If

Psal. ciii.
21.

VOL. I. then we will fulfil all Religion, all our Desires must be limited with this Reserve, If G o d shall think fit; and all our Sorrows must be stinted by this Consideration, That thus G o d has thought fit. This alone can make us die happily and bravely; for this alone can encourage us

1 Per. iv. to commit our Souls to a faithful

19. Creator, and resign up all to him; for this alone can give us an Assurance of

Rom. viii. his Favour, and convince us that we are

14. his if we are led by his Spirit. And nothing at all can give us an Assurance of this, but our being conform'd to his Will, determin'd in all things ultimately by his Choice, and our acquiescing in all the Dispensations of his Providence. The Result of this whole Argument is this, nothing but our Subjection to the Divine Will can assure us of his Favour, and nothing but his Favour can confirm and assure us against Death; and therefore, if you would die bravely and serenely, you must practise this great Lesson of Self-resignation, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

And be not discourag'd at the Height and Perfection of this Duty, nor think that I exhort you to such a Conformity with the Divine Will, as shall leave you no Natural Tendencies and Inclinations of

of your own; as if I would have Man Ser.VI.
 mov'd by GOD, like *Aristotle's* Orbs by
 Intelligences, so wholly, as to leave him
 no Motion of his own. No; I will
 still allow you the innocent Frailties and
 harmless Affections of Human Nature,
 which our Saviour himself was clad
 with. I will not forbid you to desire,
 to contend, and to pray for the Happi-
 ness and Preservation of your Selves and
 your Relations in this Temporal State.
 'Twas this Affection in our Saviour which
 made him pray, *O my Father, if it be
 possible, let this Cup pass from me.* And
 when any thing betides you or them, in-
 jurious to either your Temporal Happi-
 ness or Preservation, I will not forbid
 you to shew that Concern which may
 express your Natural Affection; *Jesus*
 himself was heavy and cast down under
 the Apprehensions of his own Death;
 and he was none of the least Mourners
 at that of *Lazarus*, the Scripture ex-
 pressly asserting, *Jesus wept.* Nor is
 there in this any Repugnancy to, or
 Reluctancy against the Will of GOD;
 for the better understanding of which,
 you may be pleas'd to observe:

That the Declaration of GOD's Will
 is sometimes in a Matter of Right and
 Wrong, Good and Evil, and this his Will

is

VOL. I. is always peremptory and unalterable ; and the least Degree of Opposition in us to this, is Irreligious and Sinful.

Sometimes he declares his Will in a Matter of that Nature, as may include in it self, or may always without Sin appear to us to do so, a Power reserv'd to himself of Altering ; such was his Declaration of his Will by the Prophet Nathan to David. *The Child also that is*
 2Sam. xii. *born unto thee shall surely die.* And therefore
 14. *David besought God for the Child ; and*
 17. *David fasted, and went in, and lay all Night upon the Earth. And the Elders of his House arose, and went to him to raise him up from the Earth : but he would not, neither did he eat Bread with them.* And he gives this Reason for it ; *And he said, while the*
 Ver. 22. *Child was yet alive, I fasted and wept ; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the Child may live ?* And this implied no Contradiction in David to the divine Will, it only implied, that he thought that God's Will was not so fix'd and peremptory, but that he might be wrought upon and mov'd to change his Sentence. And this is a Supposition on which our Saviour's Prayer is grounded, *O my Father, if it be possible, i. e. if thy Decrees be*
 not

not peremptory and unalterable, if thou **Ser. VI.**
 canst be induced to think it fit; then,
 or else not, *Let this Cup pass from me:*
 And this is so far from importing any
 Contradiction, that it first and last im-
 ports an entire Submission to his Father's
 Will. If therefore in these Cases of Af-
 fliction and Judgments denounced, we
 not only may, but I think ought to pray
 against that Declaration of his Will;
 how much more may we set our selves
 against these Things, when there's no
 Declaration on GOD's side, foretelling us
 what is his Will? And in all this there
 is not contain'd any direct Opposition to
 the Will of GOD.

Lastly: The Declaration of the Divine
 Will is not against our Affections and
 Passions wholly and absolutely, but
 against some extravagant and exorbitant
 Degrees of 'em; as in this Case before
 us (a), it is not necessary, in order to our
 Submission to the Divine Will, that we
 mourn not at all; but it is necessary, that
 the Consideration of our Hope, and the
 Nature of our present State, and the
 Consideration of the Divine Will, prefix
 proper Limits and Boundaries to our
 Grief. Which puts me in Mind of the

(a) Preach-
 ed at a
 Funeral.

III^d Thing

VOL. I.



III^d Thing I propos'd to speak to,
To teach you to behave your selves
under this, and all other Afflictions,
with Submission to the Will of G. O. D.
And surely it must needs appear to you
highly reasonable, that his Will should
be done, rather than ours, if you con-
sider,

- 1st, That he is our Governor.
- 2^{dly}, That he is the Author and
Preserver of our Beings.
- 3^{dly}, That his Will is always best
for us.

1st: He is our Governor, Supreme,
Absolute, Omniscient, Omnipotent. It
is but reasonable, that he that made the
World, should govern his own World;
and indeed none else can; nothing but
Infinite Power and Wisdom can either
make or govern the World. Government
therefore is his Business, and Obedience
ours; and when we pass beyond this Line,
and prefer our Will before his, we trans-
gress our Duty; like the Rebellious Spi-
rits of Darkeness, we usurp his Throne,
and invade his Power. And this sure is
the highest Injustice, and will appear the
extremest

extremest Madness and Folly, if we Ser. VI.
consider either,

1. That he is no weak, precarious Governor, whose Power depends on the Affections of his People, and is limited by their Privileges. No; his Will is absolute and uncontrollable, and his Power irresistible; and therefore all our Opposition to his Will must needs prove fruitless and unsuccessful, and consequently as foolish as it is sinful. Or if we consider,

2. That this Almighty Power is not an unkind or cruel one, is not a blind and arbitrary one; but joyn'd with infinite Goodness; and therefore can do nothing to his poor Creatures, which the best of Princes, and the most indulgent of Fathers, if they were Wise and Holy, as well as kind and good, would not do to their Subjects, and to their Children. How impious then, as well as sinful and foolish, must it be in us, to prefer our Will before his?

2^{dly}, GOD is the Author and Preserver of our Beings, the Source and Fountain of all the Good we enjoy. And this imports two Things:

1. That when he bereaves us of Estate, Friends, Life it self, he but resumes his own; and therefore it is the high-

VOL. I. highest Injustice in his Creatures to be dissatisfy'd, with what he does. This Thought was it that inspir'd Job with Patience, under far greater Sufferings than any one can in reason look upon his to be, even under the Loss of all; not only Flocks and Herds, and Servants, but Children, all his Children at once; and upon all this which came on him at once, and unprepar'd too, his Reflexion was
 Job i. 21, only this, *Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

2. Since all we have or hope for, is the Largess of his Bounty and Goodness; this imports, that it would be unkind and ungrateful in us, to murmur at any thing he does. Why should we not willingly give up all to his Pleasure, who hath given us all? If we lov'd him, howe'er Things went with us, we should rejoyce, that in all we suffer'd, he were pleas'd, and his Will were done. And we must needs do so, if we consider,

3dly, That 'tis always best for us, that his Will take place. Into what a Sea of Matter am I entering? How numerous Thoughts, like Tides and Waves, come rushing in upon me? How easy were

were it, to the flattest Fancy, to be both Ser. VI.
 Copious and Eloquent on this Argument? 
 How easy were it, from the Consideration
 of our own Folly, Blindness and Impo-
 tence, to convince you, how unfit we are
 to chuse for our selves; and from the
 Consideration of the Divine Perfections,
 to conclude his Fitness to chuse for us,
 and govern us? By what numerous In-
 stances could I shew you those Events
 which we look'd upon as the greatest
 Evils, proving the wisest and readiest Me-
 thod to our Happiness; and so, on the
 contrary? But my Time forces me to be
 very brief on this Subject. In short, then,
 you can't but believe, that the Almighty's
 Will is always best for us, if you believe
 him of infinite Goodness, Wisdom and
 Power.

If you believe him of infinite Good-
 ness, you will easily conclude with the
 Prophet, *That he doth not afflict wil-* Lam. iii.
lingly, nor grieve the Children of Men: 33.
 That he aims at our Good in all our
 Chastisements; and therefore, that un-
 less our Misbehaviour under an Affliction
 defeat the Designs of Heaven, it will
 always prove for our Good.

If you believe him again infinitely
 Wise, you will easily conclude, that
 G O D doth nothing without a Reason,
 nay,

Vol. I. nay, without the highest Reason; and that therefore when any thing befalls us, or our Relations, it is always best for them, or for us, or for the whole: I add, or for the whole; because it is highly reasonable, that our particular Interests should give Way to the Concern and Benefit of the whole, for this makes most for the Glory of G O D's Government. G O D alone sees all the Connexions and Dependencies, the Relations and Tendencies of Things; and he alone can, thro' a long Chain of Causes, thro' a long Train of Events, see to the End of all things; and therefore he alone can tell what's good for us, and how to compass it. Nor let us be discouraged at any time, because the present Face of Providence seems black and melancholy:

Isa. lv. 8. *His Ways are not as our Ways, neither are his Thoughts as our Thoughts.* His Methods are as much above ours, as his Understanding; and he, it may be, is creating Light out of Darknes, a World out of a Chaos, when we think the Light darken'd, and Law and Order running into Confusion.

This Perswasion will be strongly confirm'd in us, if we contemplate seriously his Power; for if we believe him Omnipotent, we must conclude, that he can
pro-

produce any thing out of any thing; Ser.VI.
and that no Thought can be with-holden
from him; that whatever the Beginning *Job xlii.*
 or Middle of Things be, the End will
 infallibly be what he designs. 2.

What Imprudence, then, upon the whole Matter, is it in us to prefer our Will before God's, when we are assur'd that his Goodness designs our Happiness, that his Wisdom can best contrive it, and his Power most easily effect it? What a Happiness is it to us, that this Glorious Power concerns himself about us? What an Advantage is to us, to be govern'd by his Will? That our deprav'd Nature should be steer'd and govern'd by his Goodness, our Blindness guided by his Wisdom, and our Weakness supported and supply'd by his Power? Well may we not only not oppose his Will, but look upon it as our greatest Happiness, as our highest Prerogative, to be govern'd by it; *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

The End of the Sixth Sermon.

K

S E R-

produce any thing out of any thing. Set 7.
 and that no thought can be without a
 from him: that whatever the beginning
 on Middle of things be, the End will
 infallibly be what he designs.
 What impediment, then, upon the
 whole Matter, is it in us to prefer our
 Will before God's, when we are assur'd
 that his Goodness designs our Happiness,
 that his Wisdom can best contrive it, and
 his Power most easily effect it? What a
 Happiness is it to us, that this Glo-
 rious Power concerns himself about us,
 What an Advantage is it to us, to be
 govern'd by his Will. That our de-
 private Nature should be assist'd and
 govern'd by his Goodness, our happi-
 ness assist'd by his Wisdom, and our
 wants supply'd and supply'd by
 his Power. Will any we not truly
 not oppose his Will? 5
 as our greatest Happiness, as our high-
 est Privilege, to be govern'd by it.
 Let us I tell you, be assured.

The End of the Sixth Sermon

S E R M O N

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SERMON VII.

The Things of this World Empty
and Transitory; and there-
fore our Happiness to be placed
in God alone.

PSAL. xxxix. 7.

*And now, Lord, what wait I for? my
Hope is in thee.*



ST. Peter compares us to Vol. I.
Strangers and Pilgrims upon
Earth. Our Life indeed 1 Pet. ii
doth very nearly resemble a 11.
Journey, and We Travellers.

When we have pass'd the great Stages
of Life, Childhood, Youth, and Mid-
dle-Age, if we make a Stand, and
give ourselves Time to look back, ma-
ny tedious Steps have we taken, many
Dangers have we escap'd, many Trou-
bles have we pass'd through: And if we
look forward upon the Way that is still

VOL. I. behind, 'tis a Rugged and a Troublesome
 Descent; and the last Stage of our Journey, that is Death, is apt to strike our Senses with more Amazement and Terror than all the rest: And yet on we must, for Time stands not still. In this Case, all the Comfort Man can find, must be from **GOD**; he alone can lead us through this Rugged Way; he alone can support our Steps, that we fall not; he alone can give us Light and Comfort in the Valley and Shadow of Death and Terror: And happy is the Man who makes **GOD** his Hope, who has renounced all Worldly Supports, and relies upon Him alone: who can say, with the *Psalmist*, *Now, Lord, what wait I for? my Hope is in thee.*

Or, to express our State by a more lively Portraiture yet, by a nearer Image of Human Condition; when we have made a long and perilous Voyage, tofs'd by Winds and Tides, and are come at last to our Sick-bed, (I would have said Death-bed) where we must all one Day lie down; like *St. Paul* in his Voyage, we seem to be come to that fatal Place where two Seas meet, Time and Eternity; here the hinder Part of us must be broken by the Violence, and buried in the Waves of Time; but the
 fore-

fore-Part of us, the better Part of us, Ser. VII. will stand fast and firm in the vast Ocean of Eternity: Or rather here the Soul, like St. Paul, must get safe to Shore; but the Leaky Hulk of the Body must, like his Ship, suffer Shipwreck.

Now if we consider ourselves in this Condition, as our Departed Friend, it is not improbable, by her pitching upon this *Text*, might; how can we more fully and lively express the Motions of our Souls, the working of our own Thoughts, than in the Words of the Psalmist, *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my Hope is in thee.* Preach'd at a Funer

Now that this Body leaks and gapes, *what wait I for?* There is nothing in this Tempestuous Sea, the World, which I can expect; neither if there were, is this shatter'd Vessel fit for a longer Voyage. Therefore *my Hope is in thee.* I do discover Land, I ken a Happy Shore; and if thou vouchsafe but thy Power, thy Strength to rescue me, I shall escape this Wreck, I shall leave this Storm and Tempest, this Foundred, Sinking Vessel, the World, and the Body, behind me, and shall come to that Happy Land, where the Pleasures of Eternity will make me forget the Travails and the Dangers of Time, where the Glory of

VOL. I. an Exalted Nature will make me forget
 and despise the Reproach and Dishonour
 of the Body. But if thou help not, if
 thou *hide thy Face in the needful Time*
 of my *Trouble*, vain is my own Strength,
 vain is the Help of Man; therefore mine
 Eyes, while they sink in Death, look up
 towards thee, my Prayers are pour'd forth
 before thee, my Soul *waits* for thee,
 and *my Hope is in thee*, in thee alone.

Psalm cii.

7.

Applying the Words to our present
 Occasion, there doth appear to me no-
 thing in 'em that is obscure or difficult;
 and therefore, without losing any Time
 in the Explication of them, I shall dis-
 course of these Three Things.

I. That this World is a Place of Wait-
 ing and Expectation, not Enjoy-
 ment.

II. That we shall one Day come to
 that State of Things, when there
 will be nothing for us to *wait for*
 in this World, but our Dissolution.

III. That the Difference between the
 Evil and the Good at that Day,
 is exceeding great,

I. That this World is a Place of
 Waiting, &c. Little is it that we en-
 joy in this World, we are drill'd on by

one

one Hope after another; and the Flattery Ser. VII.
of a new Expectation, of a new Pro-
ject, sweetens our former Disappoint-
ments, and wipes out the Memory of
our Baffles, Repulses, and Losses; for
if we consider the State of this World
closely, we shall find, that we fall short
of obtaining one Half of our Hopes at
least, that we fall short of atchieving
one Half of our Designs. Our Worldly
Hopes present themselves to us, as some
Town where he must Bait or Lodge,
doth to a Traveller: The Distance seems
little, it stands upon a Height, and
there is false Ground and hollow Vales,
which the Eye passes over and perceives
not; and so when he has measur'd out
some Miles, he discovers the Distance
farther than it was before. Or rather,
our Worldly Hopes are just like Fairy
Prospects, which, as some talk, retire
before us, and at the same time invite and
delude our Pursuit.

But alas! after all, suppose we obtain
the Prize we run for, we only sow Van-
ity, and reap the Wind: We are like
Ixion, in the Poet, who, when he thought
he had caught a Goddess, found nothing
but Fog and Cloud in his Arms. There
is indeed so little in what we hop'd for,
when we enjoy it; so little in our De-

VOL. I. signs, when we have accomplish'd 'em; that we soon take a Surfeit of any Worldly Good: We are soon weary of our present Enjoyments, and this puts us upon seeking new; this puts us upon fresh Designs, new Plots and Contrivances, for some other just such a Nothing. We seek for Pleasure, but it proves our Trouble; we design Rest and a Settlement, but find ourselves engag'd in new Labours and fresh Business. Where we toil for Honour, we often meet with Disgrace, and the Favour and Friendship which we drudge for by long Service, and many Submissions and Compliances, we at last complain of as a Snare and Burden. So that if there be any thing pleasing in this Life, it consists rather in the Variety of our Aims and Designs, than the Substantial Goodness of any thing we possess or atchieve.

And it is but reasonable that it should be so, for here we have no continuing City: *Heb. xiii. 14.* God Almighty never design'd that we should put up our Rest here; like *Abraham* we have a Promis'd Land, and therefore we must wear out this Life in Flights and Pilgrimages to and fro. We are now like *Jacob* in a strange Land; it is enough, if God will give us Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on.

Genesis

xxviii 20.

But

But though our Pleasures fly from us, Ser. VII
 we cannot fly from our Fears; though 
 we in vain pursue our Worldly Hopes,
 yet every Stop we make brings us near-
 er on to Sickness and to Death: These
 seem to make as much Haste to meet
 us, as Wordly Rest and Pleasure to fly
 us, to avoid us. Good is not the only
 Thing we must wait for, we must expect
 the Evil Day, the Day of Sickness and
 of Death. So that this Life is a State of
 Waiting and Expectation, not only on the
 Account of the Emptiness and Uncer-
 tainty of Things, but also of the Short-
 ness and Uncertainty of Time. We must
 wait for our appointed Time; *As a* Job vii. 2:
Servant earnestly desireth the Shadow,
and as an Hireling looketh for the Re-
ward of his Work, so we must wait till
 our Change comes. When this will be,
 we know not; Death, like the Lord in the Luke xii.
 Parable, comes sometimes the First, some- 38.
 times the Second, sometimes the Third
 Watch; And when it comes, we must
 break off our Work, we must cut short
 our Projects, we *must return to our Earth,* Plal cxlvi.
and all our Thoughts must perish. Me- 4.
 thinks we sit at our Banquets, like the
 Flatterer of *Dionysius*, with a drawn
 Sword hanging by a weak Thread over
 our Heads; our Danger hovers over us,
 and

VOL. I. and how soon we may become its easie Prey we know not. This ought to keep us awake, and mingle Restraint, and Caution, and Modesty with all our Enjoyments. So that in the midst of Worldly Peace, in the Days of Worldly Rest and Prosperity, we ought to get our selves often to our Watch-Tower, to see whether we can discover the Approaches of the Enemy, that Death surprize us not, loaded with Surfeits of Intemperance, lull'd asleep in the Lap of Pleasure, or fetter'd in the Chains of Covetous and Ambitious Cares. For,

Italy, We shall one Day come to that State of Things, when there will be nothing for us to wait for in this World, but our Dissolution. *Solomon* tells us of *Eccles. xii. Evil Days, Years, when we shall say, we have no Pleasure in them*; when even *Jer. 5. Ver. 5. Desires shall fail, and the Mourners shall go about the Streets*; when our Eyes shall grow dim, and not be able to discover the Beauty and Grandeur of the World; when our Fancy shall be pall'd and flat, and all our Senses so enfeebled and stupify'd, that we shall not be able to discern any Charm or Enticement in Temporal Things, or feel any Pleasure in Sensual Enjoyments. This Time which

which *Solomon* means, is the Time of *Ser. VII*,
 Old Age. We see an Instance of this
 in the Case of *Barzillai*: *And the King* ^{2Sam. xix.}
said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with ^{33, 34, 35.}
me, and I will feed thee with me in Jeru-
salem. *And Barzillai said unto the King,*
How long have I to live, that I should go
up with the King unto Jerusalem? I am
this Day fourscore Years Old, and can I
discern between Good and Evil? Can thy
Servant taste what I eat, or what I
drink? Can I hear any more the Voice
of Singing-Men and Singing-Women?
Wherefore then should thy Servant be yet
a Burden unto my Lord the King?

Now what Age doth by Degrees, and
 Progress of Time, Sickneſs doth in a
 few Days, in a ſhort Moment. When the
 Curtains are drawn, and the weak, ſick-
 ly Eye cannot endure the Day-light;
 when the Spirits are in a Ferment, and
 cannot endure the Noiſe of the ſilleſt
 Whiſper, or the ſoſteſt Tread; when
 Phlegm and Choler have extinguiſh'd
 our Natural Heat, and ſcatter'd Bitter-
 neſs on the Palate; what Pleaſure can
 theſe Eyes take in beholding Beauty, or
 theſe Ears in the Harmony of Muſick,
 or this Palate in the Delicacy of Taſtes?
 Now this Time will ſoon come, and
 put an End to our Enjoyments; if we
 have

Vol. I have not then some Pleasure to entertain the Mind, if we are not supported by the Hopes of a Joyful Resurrection, if we have not a Prospect beyond the Grave, how Miserable must we needs be? This brings me to what I propos'd to shew in the

III^d and Last Place, The great Difference between the Evil and the Good, at such a Time. How Comfortless the Evil, how full of Pleasure the Good!

Prov. xiv. 32. *The Wicked is driven away in his Wickedness: but the Righteous hath Hope in his Death.* This you may easily observe in their different Behaviour in Sicknes, and the Approaches of Death. **Saul,** when he heard, *To Morrow shalt thou be with me, fell straightway all along on the Earth, and was sore afraid, and there was no Strength in him.* But **St. Paul** long'd for the Hour of his Dissolution, and when it drew nigh he rejoyced, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finish'd my Course, &c.* What Tranquillity and Satisfaction in like-manner possess'd the Breast of **Old Simeon**, at the Thoughts of his Departure, when he utter'd those Words, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace?* Nor can this appear any thing strange, when we consider, that

1 Sam. xxviii. 19. 20.

2 Tim. iv. 7.

Luke ii. 20.

that the Wicked are torn away, in Ser. VII. Death, from their Pleasures and their Good Things; but that the Virtuous are hastning thither, where they have laid up their Treasure before-hand: That the Wicked are terrify'd and amaz'd with the fearful Apprehensions of a Hell and an Eternity; but the Virtuous ravish'd with the near Prospect of those Joys that are now at hand to Crown their Hopes and Wishes.

Now 'tis easy for us to discern what ought to be the Use of this Discourse:

That, *First*, It ought to take off our Affections and Dependencies from the World. And that,

Secondly, It ought to fix our Hopes upon God.

First, It ought to take off, &c. How evident are the Reasons of this from what has been said? Why should we set our Hearts upon those Things, which 'tis very uncertain whether ever we shall obtain? *The Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wise, not yet Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to them all.*

Eccles. ix.
11.

But

Vol. I. But suppose we could accomplish the utmost of our Desires, and could load our selves with all the Honour, Wealth and Power, that Covetousness or Ambition could prompt us to wish. *Alas, what a Shadow is this?* *The Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear with hearing, nor the Heart with the Enjoyment of Worldly Things; and therefore all things are full of Labour and Travail, full of vain New Projects, and of Regret and Vexation for our Disappointments in the Old.*

But suppose that Worldly Things were as valuable in Substance and Reality, as they are in Shew and Appearance; suppose they were as Delightful in Possession, as they are Taking at a Distance; yet still they are but Temporal, they are but Flowers that wither and die whilst they are look'd upon and smell'd to.

Wisd. v. 9. They fly as a *Post that hasteth by*; they vanish, like a Ship with full Sail and Tide, out of our Sight, which leaves not as much as the *Track of her Keel in the Waves.*

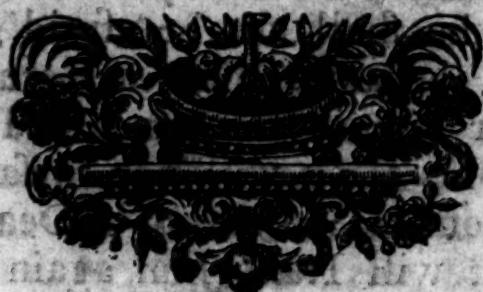
But after all, suppose the Good Things of the World were permanent and lasting; yet we ourselves are Transitory, our Life passes by like a Dream of the Night, *Isaiah xi. 6.* *All Flesh is Grass, and as the Flower of the Grass it withers away: So that how*
great

great so ever our Enjoyment were, it Ser. VII.
would be but short. We may be fondly
desirous to indulge our Sensualities for e-
ver; but Death will come and unclasp our
Arms, and, whether we will or no, dis-
engage us from our close Embraces of
Worldly Things: Sicknefs and Calami-
ties, like the Harpies in the Poet, snatch
away our luscious Morfels, just as we
are ready to sit down and eat. This is
the true State of Things, 'tis vain to
flatter our selves, 'tis vain to doat: It
may, with as great Truth, be said of
Honour, or Power, or Pleasure, what
the Psalmist said of Wealth, *Surely every* Pl. xxxix.
Man walketh in a vain Shew: surely they 6.
are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up
Riches, and knoweth not who shall gather
them.

Secondly: This ought to teach us to
fix our Hope and Dependance on God.
Blessed is the Man (saith the Prophet) Jer. xvii.
that trusteth in the Lord, and whose 7.
Hope the Lord is. Why is he Blessed?
Because he shall not be afraid of Evil
Tidings, because he has a Refuge pre-
par'd for him in the time of Trouble,
because his God will not forsake him
in the Hour of Sicknefs or of Death, be-
cause he will Raise him again at the
Last Day, and make him stand upright
in

VOL. I. in the Day of Judgment: *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous: verily he is a God that Judgeth in the Earth.*
 Plal. lviii. 11. He that leans upon God, has built the Hope of his Salvation and his Comfort on a Rock; he can't be deceiv'd by the Unfaithfulness, or frustrated by the Impotence of God; nor abus'd, or cheated, or disappointed by the Emptiness of those Things he hopes for: Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepar'd for them that love him. Nor is this all, God shall make the Man, the Righteous Man, as Eternal as his Pleasures: His Life shall be of the same Duration as the Heaven of God: For the World passeth away, and the Lust thereof: but he that doth the Will of God, abideth for Ever. 5 JY6I

The End of the Seventh Sermon.



S E R.

SERMON VIII.

Concerning Preparation for Death.

ISATAH xxxviii. 1.

Set thine House in Order: for thou shalt die, and not live.



THESE Words, in their Vol. I.
 literal Sense, regard this
 Life, as they were an Ad-
 monition to *Hezekiah*, that
 whatever Designs he had,
 whatever requir'd his Regulation, either
 in his publick or private Capacity, as he
 was a King, or as he was a private Man;
 whatever Charge he had to give, either
 to Ministers of State, Children or
 Friends; whatever Works of Charity
 or Piety he had enter'd upon; these were
 now to be look'd after, and dispatch'd
 with all Diligence: because the Thread
 of his Life was now well nigh quite
 spun out, and the fatal Scissars, by the
 L Divine

VOL. I. Divine Command, just closing to cut it off. While therefore he yet had Time, *Whatsoever his Hand found to do, he was to do it with all his Might; for there was no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave whither he was going. His Breath was now to go forth, and he was to return to his Earth; and in that very Day his Thoughts would perish.* That this is the Sense of the Text, is evident from the Expression it self that is here made use of, *Set thine House in Order.* And from hence we are taught, that it becomes a good Man, whether in a publick or private Station, to extend his Care beyond the Grave, and to testify a Concern not for his own Time only, but that which follows. A good Prince is to provide not only for the present Welfare and Prosperity of his Kingdom, but as far as in him lies, to transmit them to the following Age. I cannot therefore but think that Reflexion of *Hezekiah* a very narrow and selfish one, who when the Prophet foretold him of the Misery which *Babylon* should bring upon *Judea*, comforted himself thus, *Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the Word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good if Peace and Truth be in my Days?* So as to a private

Ecclef. ix
10.

Psalms
cxlvi. 4.

L. to V.

2 King.
xx. 19.

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vate Man; he must not only cultivate **Serm.**
Religion in his Family during his Life, **VIII.**
but in his Latter End, he must imprint, 
by Dying Words, a Love and Reverence
for it in all of 'em; he must not only
make a competent Provision for his Family,
but dispose of it prudently to 'em, and
leave it expos'd to as little Trouble and
Uncertainty as he can: He must not only
encourage Charity and Concord amongst
his Children whilst he lives, but, as far
in him lies, he must perpetuate it after
his Death, not only by recommending
it earnestly to 'em, but also by preventing,
as far as he can foresee, whatever
may be an Occasion of Discontent or
Misunderstanding between them.

Tho' the Original Meaning of these
Words be what I have explain'd to you,
yet I cannot be thought to put any force
upon them, if I from hence take occasion
to treat in general of that Preparation
for Death which regards another
World. Now this Preparation is either,

I. That which is made upon a Sick-
bed. Or,

II. That which is made in the Time
of Health and Strength.

VOL. I.

III

III

Isaiah
xxxviii.
2, 3.

Prov. i. 24
25, 26, 27,
28.

Psalm
xxxii. 6.

I begin with the *Ist*: We cannot infer any thing from hence in favour of a Death-bed Repentance. This was not the Case of *Hezekiah*, he was not now to begin to Live, he was not now to begin to Repent. *Then Hezekiah turn'd his Face toward the Wall, and pray'd unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walk'd before thee in Truth and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight. And indeed there is no one expresse Text in Scripture, that I know of, to encourage a Death-bed Repentance, but many to discourage it. To mention some few of them, Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretch'd out my Hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof: I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Distress and Anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For this shall every one that is Godly pray unto thee, in a Time when thou mayest be found: surely in the Floods of great Waters they shall*

shall not come nigh unto him. The Ex-Serm.
 ample of the Foolish Virgins seems to VIII.
 come home to this purpose. Their
 Lamps were gone out, because they had
 taken no Oil with them: *And while they* Mat. xxv.
went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and 10, 11, 12.
they that were ready went in with him to
the Marriage, and the Door was shut. Af-
terwards came also the other Virgins, say-
ing, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answer'd
and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

The Advocates of a Death-bed Re-
 pentance build chiefly upon two Pas-
 sages. The First is that of the Pro-
 phet: *When the Wicked Man turn-* Ezekiel
eth away from his Wickedness, that he xviii. 27.
hath committed, and doth that which is
lawful and right, he shall save his Soul
alive. When, i. e. say they, at what-
soever time, whether soon or late. But
it is not difficult to shew, that this Text
will stand them in little stead; for here
the Wicked Man is plainly suppos'd in a
Condition to put his Repentance in
practice, to lead a new Life, and reform
the Errors of his past one; which is
not the Case of a Sinner upon his Death-
bed.

The other Place these Men lay hold
 on, is, the Success that we read attended
 the Repentance of the Thief upon the Luk. xx. ii
 43.

VOL. I. Cross; concerning which, Learned Men observe, that there was one such Example, that no Man might despair; and but one, that no Man might presume. And what if Christ had a mind to exercise Prerogative-Mercy, for the Demonstration of his Power and Authority? What if this Man did not now first Repent, but had been long in Prison, and there actually begun a new Life? What if, being otherwise a good Man, he fell into this Sin, for which he suffer'd, thro' some extraordinary Temptation, and as soon as he had committed it, repented of it? What if he had no Opportunity to confess Christ before, and laid hold upon the first Opportunity offer'd him? You see how many different Suppositions may entirely enervate and defeat the Force of this Instance: Surely therefore Hope built on it is a *House built on the Sand*; especially when, if it held never so strong in all Particulars, he must be a bold Man that would dare to deduce a General Doctrine of so great Importance, from one single Instance.

Matt. vii.
26.

But you will say then, What is a Sinner to do on his Death-bed? I answer;
1. We cannot indeed warrant him Salvation, because we have no Text for it in the

the holy Scripture. 'Tis true, if we could Serm. V
 suppose him chang'd and sanctify'd upon VIII.
 his Death-bed by the Holy Ghost, we
 might boldly affirm that he would be
 saved; for God does nothing to no Pur-
 pose, much less so great a Work; and
 we are assur'd in Scripture, that Sancti-
 fication and Regeneration is in order to
 Justification. But it is impossible that
 we ever should be assur'd of this, because
 we have no sure Ground to expect such
 an extraordinary Mercy, and because
 Repentance, in this Case, does commonly
 flow from the Disorders and Terrors
 which a guilty Soul must at this time
 be under, if it be not directly stupid, or
 void of all Sense of another Life. There-
 fore, as we can make no direct Promise
 to such a Sinner, so he ought not to
 expect one, he ought not so much as
 to aim at the full Assurance of Hope. Heb. vi.
 Yet, 11.

Because the Mercy of God is
 boundless, and the Merits of Christ in-
 finite, therefore he ought not utterly to
 cast away all Hope, but do all he can;
 and this ought to be something extraor-
 dinary, and proportionable to his Case
 as much as may be. He is to make
 whatever Reparation he can to the Ho-
 nour of God, by confessing his Sin and
 Folly,

VOL. I. Polly, and taking Shame upon himself. He must do all he can towards the reclaiming of any of his Companions or Friends out of their ill Courses, into which, it may be, his Example had seduced them; and if it be in his Power, he ought to do some extraordinary Work of Charity or Piety. And after he has done all, let him humble himself to the Dust, let him condemn and loath himself, let him beg the Prayers of every true Christian, and let him cry earnestly and incessantly to God for Grace and Mercy, and let him say, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and Just are thy Judgments:* I have nothing to plead, nothing to fly to but Mercy; if I perish, I will perish bemoaning, confessing, glorifying, and praying. Thus much of a Death-bed Repentance; but before I dismiss this Head, I shall say something of what Preparation the Righteous and Good Man is to make on his Bed of Sickness, when he finds his End approaching.

Psal. cxix.
137.

There is a great deal which even such a one ought to do at this time; he ought to reflect on his Life past, and humble himself for his Sloth and Unprofitableness under the Means of Grace that he has enjoy'd; for how far soever he has advanced, yet has he been far

from

from that Frame of Spirit which he might have arriv'd at, and from that Vigilance, Diligence and Steadiness in the Ways of G O D, which the Gospel exhorts us to. More particularly, he ought to confess and bewail before G O D, those Sins which carried the greatest Aggravation in them, and most wounded the Conscience. He ought to consider the great Articles of his Faith, and the Grounds and Reasons upon which they are founded; for these are the Truths that minister Strength and Consolation upon a Death-bed; and our resting upon them, and rejoycing in them at such a time, is the best way to convince all about us of the Excellency and Usefulness of a Sound Faith. To all this I must add, that he ought, now especially, to desire the Prayers of the Church, and particularly those of his Minister in private, whose Discourse also may be of great Use to enlighten and direct him, to comfort and strengthen him. And, *Lastly*, the Partaking of the Holy Sacrament, and that more than once, if the Sickness be of any length, will cherish and encrease his Charity, confirm his Faith, exalt in him the Love of G O D, and Gratitude to our Blessed Lord; it will enlighten his Mind, and soften

VOL. I. soften his Heart, and beget in him the
 ~~~~~  
 ~~~~~  
 liveliest Sense of the Deformity and Vileness of Sin, and a most tender Contrition for it.

II. Another sort of Preparation for Death, and the best too, is that which we make for it in Health and Strength. I shall discourse to you,

First, Of the Nature of this Preparation.

Secondly, Of the Necessity of making it. And,

Thirdly, Point out to you a Motive or two that may be of use to excite and quicken you to the setting about it:

1st, What our Preparation for Death is to consist in. 'Tis commonly said, and truly, That the best Preparation for Death, is a good Life; he who by Repentance has reconcil'd himself to God, and by a vertuous and careful Behaviour, has secur'd the Peace of his own Mind, has nothing to fear in Death. *The Sting*
 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. *of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Sin repented of, and forsaken in Life, gives a good Man no Uneasiness in Death; and the Law has

no condemning Force on *them which are* *Serm.*
in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the *VIII.*
Flesh, but after the Spirit. He who by *Rom. viii.*
 a Life of Prayer maintains a Commu-
 nion with God; he who by Daily Me-
 ditation has his Conversation in Hea-
 ven, may meet Death with Desire and
 Joy, as it is only passing into that State
 of Perfection and Pleasure which his
 Soul thirsted after; he who by digest-
 ing the great Articles of our Faith into
 Daily Nourishment, has made them Na-
 tural and Familiar to him; he who by
 frequent Communion in the Lord's Sup-
 per, has received repeated Pledges of
 God's Favours in Christ, and has no
 doubt at all either of the Happiness of
 a Future State, or of his own Share
 in it; he, finally, who by frequent
 Acts of Self-Denial, by vanquishing
 Temptations, and by a Conscientious
 Discharge of the Duties of his Station,
 has labour'd all his Life (or a long part
 of it) to approve himself to our Lord,
 may leave the Body in Triumph, and
 say with St. Paul, *I have fought a good* *2 Tim. iv*
Fight, I have finished my Course, I have *7, 8.*
kept the Faith. Henceforth there is
laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness,
which the Lord the Righteous Judge,
shall give me at that Day.

I might

VOL. I. I might shew, if there were need, by several unanswerable Reasons, that this must be the Preparation which will fit us for Death. What is the ultimate End of a Christian? Is it not the Participation of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? Ought we not therefore to be made meet for this? Ought we not to be Holy? Ought we not to be Children of the Light? What was the great End of Christ's coming into the World? Was it not to redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works? What is the Substance of that Gospel which St. Paul and all the Apostles taught? Was it not Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ? How shall we then be fit to die, to appear before our Lord, and to be judg'd, if we have not in some degree, with Sincerity, answer'd the End of our Saviour's coming into the World, and comply'd with the Terms of the Gospel? In few words, if we would prepare for Death as we should, we must search the Scriptures, that we may be sure to know and believe the great Truths of them; we must meditate upon these Truths often, that they may have a due Influence on our Hearts and Lives; we must consider our Ways, that

Col. i. 12.

Tit. ii. 14.

Acts xx.
21.

Acts xvii.
11.

that they may be conform'd to the Will of **Serm.**
 God; we must labour earnestly to grow **VHL**
in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Christ
Jesus our Lord. In one word, we must **2 Pet. iii.**
 be diligent, not only in our Spiritual **18.**
 Duties, but also in those of our Secular
 Station; this is *to work the Works of him* **John ix. 4.**
who sent us into the World, and to an-
 swer the End of our Creation; and to
 do this in our Health and Strength, is
 what our Saviour means by *while it is*
Day; and surely, it behoves us thus to
 do, because *the Night, i. e. Sickness and*
Death, cometh, when no Man can work.

2dly, Of the Necessity of our Prepa-
 ration. To die well, is a Matter of
 that Importance, that if to prepare for
 it were the whole Business of Life, Life
 were well spent. Eternal Misery or
 Happiness are the Consequences of a good
 or ill Death; How does it concern us
 then to prepare for it? Besides, as dying
 well is a Matter of the highest Import-
 tance, so is it a Matter of great Difficulty
 too. It requires a strong Faith and as-
 sur'd Hope, a calm Spirit and a well-set-
 tled Judgment. Is it an easy thing think
 you, to part with all that is dear to us
 in this World willingly? To bear the
 Evils of a Sick-bed patiently, and to
 meet God in Judgment chearfully, tho'
 hum-

Vol. I. humbly? Death is a terrible thing to the Wicked; and even the Good are wont to be shaken and disorder'd at its Appearance. The Message in my Text, *Thou shalt die, and not live*, discompos'd and disorder'd pious and upright *Hezekiah*; And *Hezekiah wept sore*.

Isaiah

xxxviii.3.

I come, in the last place, to point out to you those Considerations that may be of use in quickning you in this Preparation. And,

1. We should be often thinking of Death, and that the Time must come, when it may be said to us, as it is here in the Text, *You shall die, and not live*. Let us live as long as we will, we cannot live here for ever; and let us put off the Evil Day as far as we please; we cannot put it off for good and all. This will convince us of the Folly, either of neglecting to make Preparation for Death, as if we should never die; or of making such Preparation for this present Life, as if we were to live here for ever. And these two Perswasions would make us good Men; according to that of the Son of *Sirach*, *Remember the End, and thou shalt never do amiss*.

Ecclus. vii

36.

2. Consider, that not only we must die, but that we must die in a very little time, we know not how soon. Whether

ther

ther we will think of Death or not, *Sermon*
 Death is daily drawing nearer to us. *VIII.*
Beast not thy self of to Morrow, for thou
knowest not what a Day may bring forth, *Proverbs*
 is the Advice of the Wise Man. *xxvii. 1.* Death
 has come upon many, as our Saviour
 tells us the Deluge did upon the Old
 World, and Judgment will upon this;
 while *they were eating and drinking,* *Matthew*
marrying, and giving in marriage. *xxiv. 38.* This
 is a Reflexion which will convince us, not
 only that we ought to prepare for Death,
 but that we ought to do it to Day. Since
 we know not when we shall die, we ought
 to be always prepar'd for Death; we
 ought not to say with the Scoffers,
Where is the Promise of his Coming? *2 Pet. iii.*
 Nor with the Wicked Servant in the *4.*
 Gospel, *My Lord delayeth his Coming.* *Matthew*
 We must not, with the Foolish Virgins, *xxiv. 48.*
while the Bridegroom tarrieth, slumber *Matthew*
and sleep. This is not the Lesson *xxv. 5.*
 the Suddenness and Uncertainty of
 Death teaches us; this is not what
 our Lord calls us to, but *Watch there-* *Matthew*
fore, for you know not what Hour your *xxiv. 42*
Lord doth come. Peradventure, at Noon-
 day, peradventure at Midnight, per-
 adventure to Day, peradventure to Mor-
 row, Death may alarm us, by seiz-
 ing, with its Fore-runners, some of our
 Out-

Vol. I. Outworks; impairing our Senses and Understanding; or may surprize us at once, without any Warning at all; and then, *Blessed is that Servant who shall be found so doing.*

Ver. 46.

The End of the Eighth Sermon.



5 JY61

S E R-



SERMON IX.

Shewing by what Means we may
look for Death with Comfort :
That Life of it self, is not de-
sirable; and upon what Accounts
only the Desire of it is allow-
able in a Christian.

[The First Sermon on this Text.]

PHIL. i. 22, 23.

*—Yet what I shall chuse I wot not. For I
am in a strait betwixt two.*



O Two Things, in the VOL. I
common Opinion of Man-
kind, are more contrary
than Life and Death.
Fancy paints the one ghast-
ly and terrible, the other pleasing and
agree-

Vol. I. agreeable; and even when we consider
 and judge deliberately, we can scarce for-
 bear making the one the greatest Evil,
 and the other the greatest Good. And
 accordingly, not only the Foolish and
 Fortunate, but the Unfortunate and In-
 genious are so far from being desirous of
 Death, and weary of Life, that they fly
 from the one when it approaches; and
 hold fast the other, when it would be
 gone, with all their Might; and yet the
 Apostle, in my Text, was *in a Strait be-
 tween these two*. Death appear'd to him
 no less, if not more, desirable than Life;
 there were such Powerful Motives and
 Attractions in both, that he was at a
 loss, and knew not which to prefer,
What I shall chuse I wot not.

1st: He was fully assur'd, that he was
 in the Grace and Favour of God, and
 therefore that Death could only make
 him more Happy: He well knew, that
 as soon as he left the World, he should
 be translated into Heaven; and that as
 soon as he quitted the Body, he should
 dwell in the Presence and the Joys of
 our Lord. On this Account, he could
 not but desire to *depart, and to be with
 Christ, as that which was far better*;
 better than a Pilgrimage and Warfare
 upon Earth, or such a Presence in the
 Body,

Body, as intercepted and obstructed his Ser.IX.
 Presence with, and Enjoyment of our 
 Lord. But, 2 Cor. v.

2^{dly}: The Apostle being assur'd, that
 his Life would contribute to the Ho-
 nour of our Lord, and Service of the
 Church, his Zeal for God's Glory
 carry'd it against a strong Desire of his
 own immediate Happiness, *Neverthe- Ver.24;*
less, to abide in the Flesh is more need- 25.
ful for you. And having this Confidence,
I know that I shall abide and continue
with you all, for your Furtherance and
Joy of Faith. So that upon the whole,
 we see, the Glory of Christ was the
 Supreme and Ultimate End of this
 great Apostle; this was the Standard
 and Rule not only of his Actions, but
 even of his Judgment, Desires and Af-
 fections. It was impossible for him,
 nay, it had been impious too, not to
 desire his own Happiness, considering
 what it was to consist in; yet the Glory
 of his Lord was the first and chief
 Thing he aim'd at, both in Life and
 Death; and therefore his Zeal for that,
 prevail'd even over the Love of him-
 self, as far as his own immediate Hap-
 piness should in the least obstruct our
 Lord's Glory. We see, that St. Paul's
 Fluctuation between Life and Death,

Vol. I. proceeded from a Confidence, that if he liv'd, he should promote the Glory of Christ; if he died, he should be more happy. You will grant, I know, that this Suspense and Uncertainty of the Apostle's Choice, was a very natural Result of that Assurance which he had: But how came he to be thus assur'd? Assur'd, that if he died, he should immediately enter into the Joy of his Lord? Assur'd, that if he lived, neither his own Weakness, nor the Malice of Man, nor the Subtlety of the Devil, should be able to supplant or overthrow him; but that he should propagate the Gospel, by his Preaching and Example; and whenever God would think fit, he should in the end seal and confirm it by his Blood? To Answer this Question, I will not search for any particular Revelation vouchsafed St. Paul, in reference to these Things; but will mention only those Grounds of his Assurance, which it may be useful to us all to reflect on; and the rather, because they are those, which he himself has assign'd in the Verses immediately preceeding my

--Ver. 20, Text, *According to my earnest Expectation and my Hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed: but that with all Boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified*

21.

nified in my Body, whether it be by Life, *Ser. IX.*
or by Death. For to me to live is Christ,
and to die is Gain. Here the Apostle
points out to us these Three Grounds
of his Assurance.

1st: The Goodness and the Promises
of G O D; According to my earnest Ex-
pectation and my Hope, that in nothing
I shall be ashamed. This, tho' it do not
express, yet does imply the Goodness
and Promises of G O D; for on nothing
else can the Hope of a Christian be firmly
builded.

2^{dly}: The Experience the Apostle
had in many Trials of his own Integrity,
But that with all Boldness, as always,
so now also Christ shall be magnified in
my Body, whether it be by Life or by Death.
Tribulation worketh Patience, and Pati- *Rom. v.*
ence, Experience; and Experience, Hope. 34.

Lastly: A just and evident Sense of
the State and Frame his Soul was now
in; For to me to live is Christ, and to die
is Gain; viz. It is not so much I that
now live, as Christ, that is in me; Christ
the Vital Principle by which I act and
move; Christ in me, the Hope of Glory,
it is by him, and for him I live. Or
keeping more strictly to the Context, I
know by what Spirit I am led, what
Faith, Love and Zeal possesses my Bo-

Vol. I. fom. I am abundantly conscious to my self, that the Glory of my Master is the great Design and End of my Life; for this only I count it worth my while to live: Being abundantly satisfy'd in this, I am sure, that *for me to die* will be the greatest Gain and Advantage I am capable of; for I shall no sooner break out of this Body, but I shall pass into the Presence of my Master, who will receive me with open Arms, and I shall dwell for ever in his Embraces. Oh! how happy should we be, could we but upon the same Grounds arrive at the Confidence of the Apostle? How happy should we be, if we were not only perswaded of the boundless Goodness of God, and of the Truth and Certainty of his Promises; but that our Hearts could assure us, that we have a well-grounded Interest in both? How happy should we be, could we appeal to our Victories over Temptations, as the Proofs of our Integrity? How happy, lastly, were we truly conscious to our selves, of a Faith, Love and Zeal predominant over all our Passions and Affections? Then should we too, like the Apostle, scarcely know which to chuse, Life or Death; we should neither be too fond of the one, nor fearful of the other; our Life would be

be useful, and our Death joyful. But, *Sen IX.*
 alas! I doubt the Case is quite other-
 wise with us; we look upon this World,
 not Heaven, as our Portion; Our own
 Pleasure, Honour and Interest, not the
 Glory of our Master, are the Things we
 aim at; and then as we cannot say, that
to us to live is Christ, so neither, by con-
 sequence, dare we presume to say, that
to us to die is Gain. Thus you easily dis-
 cern, by what Steps we are to attain to
 that Height, where the Apostle stood;
 if we will die in Peace, we must live
 to Christ, we must firmly believe the
 Gospel, die to the World, and seek his
 Glory. There are Two Things here
 then to be considered:

1st: What St. Paul's Desire of Life
 did not proceed from.

2^{dy}: From what it did.

It did not proceed from the Love
 of the Body, or the World; it was not
 the Desire of the Natural Man, but
 the New Creature, *the World is cru-* Gal. vi. 14
cify'd unto me, and I unto the World.
 That this State of St. Paul's may be
 ours, I will shew you,

VOL. I.

I. That tho' Life, consider'd in it self as a meer Natural, Animal Life, cannot deserve to be much valued by a Christian: Yet,

II. That there are several, and those very just Reasons, why a Christian may desire to prolong his Life.

I. That tho' Life, &c. The thing is plain, whether we will see it, or not; and whenever we are our selves, whenever our Lusts and Passions are laid, and we make an impartial Reflexion on this Life, we cannot deny it. The Duration of it is very short, the Attainments of it are very low and defective, the Enjoyments few and empty, and the Designs of it worthless and contemptible, and vain is the Power, the Pomp, and the Splendor of it. The Body is, at best, but a crazy, lumpish Heap, and it is a very little part of Life wherein it is in its Flower and Strength; and so many are the Evils which are mix'd with the good Things of Life, that it is very disputable, at least to the far greater part of Mankind, which of the two fill up the greater Space of it. These are the Thoughts which the Scripture

ever

ever and anon suggests to us, to abate Ser. IX.
our Passion for this Sensitive Life: *The World passeth away, and the Lust thereof.* ^{1 John ii. 17.}
We are said to dwell in Houses of Clay, ^{Job iv. 19.}
whose Foundation is in the Dust, which
are crush'd before the Moth. All Flesh is ^{Isai. xl. 6.}
Grass, and all the Goodness thereof is as
the Flower of the Field. The Eye is not ^{Ecclef. i. 8.}
satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear filled
with hearing. All things are full of La-
bour, Man cannot utter it. That which is ^{--Ver. 15.}
crooked cannot be made straight: and that
which is wanting cannot be numbred.
Vain Man would be wise, tho' Man be ^{Job xi. 12.}
born like a wild Ass's Colt. This is the
Sum-Total of the Years, the Enjoy-
ments and Attainments of the Natural
Man,

As to his Designs, poor and wretched
are they, Surely every Man walketh in a ^{Pf. xxxix 6.}
vain Shadow, surely they are disquieted
in vain: he heapeth up Riches, and can-
not tell who shall gather them; and yet
has not the Sense either to bestow
or enjoy them. The Case is much the
same with Voluptuousness; Solomon,
than whom no Man ever had a richer
Fancy, or more plentiful Fortune, has
abundantly demonstrated, both by Rea-
son and Experience, that Mirth is Mad-
ness, Pleasure a Dream and a Cheat;
and

Vol. I. and that were there not another World, Vanity and Vexation were the whole of this. But still you will say, There remains one Thing you have taken no Notice of, that is, State and Grandeur. It is true, there does so, and it is the Idol of Mankind in general; but whether it deserves to be so, we may soon see. What is there in it that privileges this from Evil, or raises it above Vanity? May it not be blacken'd by Calumnies, supplanted by Artifices and Intrigues, betray'd by Falshood and Perfidiousness, or overturn'd by Ambition, Hypocrisie, and Enthusiasm? Ah! I wish this Day (a) had never furnish'd us with so clear, tho' so sad a Proof of these Truths. This must, whether we will or no, convince us, that the higher the Station, the greater are the Calamities it is expos'd to, and that Majesty it self is liable to the insolent and impious Violence of wicked Men. But I will not anticipate to Morrow; and therefore I hasten from a Subject, which no honest Man, I will not say Christian, can think on, without Grief and Horror; the one for the deplorable, tho' excellent End of a Virtuous Prince; the other, for the Crimes and Villanies that brought him to it.

(a) Preach-
ed on the
30th of Ja-
nuary, be-
ing Sun-
day.

This

or This is enough to shew, that this **Ser. IX**
 present Life, consider'd in it self without
 any farther Prospect, cannot deserve to
 be much valued by any sensible Man,
 much less by a Christian, by a Child
 of the Light and of the Day. And yet
 if it appears thus cheap in it self, how
 much more must it do so, if compar'd
 with another World? How must the
 Beauty of that World eclipse this?
 What is Time to Eternity? A Corrupti-
 ble, Crazy Body, a Languishing, Sick-
 ly Life, to an Immortal, Incorruptible,
 Spiritual and Vigorous one? What, last-
 ly, are the poor Attainments, or the
 Imaginary Pleasures of this Natural
 State, to those of that, *where we shall*
know as we are known, and see Face
to Face, and enjoy G O D himself, our
dear Lord, Angels, and the Spirits of
just Men made perfect. Ah! did we
 firmly believe, frequently reflect on,
 and devoutly ponder these Things,
i. e. the Worthlessness of this Natural,
 Sensitive Life, and the Excellency of
 a Spiritual and Heavenly one, what
 manner of Men should we soon become?
 How truly Wise, and Good, and Holy?
 What noble Desires, what strong and
 generous Resolutions, should we soon
 find our Breasts possess'd with?

1 Cor. xiii
12.

But

VOL. I. But some of you yet may be apt to say, Has not G o d himself implanted in every one of us the Love of Life? **1 Tim. vi. 17.** Has not God given us *the Things* of this World *richly to enjoy*? Why then may we not value what G o d himself calls Good? Why may we not cherish a Passion, which the Wise Author of our Beings has implanted in us? To the former part of this Objection, I Answer, 'Tis true, the Love of Life is from G o d, (whether it were more weak in our First Parents, and now more violent in us, I'll not dispute) as it is subservient to several good Ends, even in the Natural Man. Were the Life of our Neighbour, or our own, cheap in our Eyes, we should be tempted, upon every slight Provocation, to invade the one; and on every little Pet and Discontent, to throw away the other: Were it not for this Love of Life, we should hardly be induced to undergo the Toils, the Difficulties, the Hazards, which the Support and the Defence of it frequently demand. Certainly then it is commendable enough to be led by Nature, till we come to be led by a higher Principle; to follow Inclination, till we can come to act thro' a Sense of Duty. It is in this Case, as in another
mention'd

mention'd by St. Paul, *First that which is Natural, and then that which is Spiritual.* Here we may begin, but here we must not end: For Grace raises us above Nature; Faith reduces and retrenches our Natural Inclinations, and excites in us far more sublime and Heavenly Desires; by Nature we are fond of this Animal Life, but by Grace we aspire after a Spiritual one; Nature tends strongly towards the Things of the Body, but the New Creature groans for, and presses on towards a Heavenly State. I conclude therefore, that the Love of Life was not planted in us by God, for the sake of Life it self; but for the sake of many excellent Ends that we may carry on in it. Life is the Foundation upon which all our Capacities and Hopes are builded; for this is our Day of Grace, this is the Time allowed us for our Probation, this is the Season for Faith and Repentance, it is now we must grow Wise and do Good, now we must secure our Eternity, and *work the Works of him who sent us; for the Night cometh when no Man can work.*

Ser. IX.
1 Cor. xv.
46.

John ix.
4.

As to the latter part of the Objection, Are not the Good Things of this Life the Gifts of God? Has not he himself
styl'd

Vol. I. styl'd them Good, why may not we then set a Value upon them? I Answer plainly, They are the Gifts of G O D, they are good, very good, speaking comparatively with respect to the Evils of Life. Thus Health, compar'd to Sick-ness, Plenty to Want, Liberty to Slavery, are good Things; and as such we may esteem and desire them; bless G O D for them when we have them, and pray to him for them when we want them, with a Resignation to his Will.

But are these indeed the Thoughts of the Objectors? I am afraid few of them do consider, that the Good Things of Life are the Gifts of G O D. How few are they who think on this, That it is

Deut. viii. *God alone who gives Man Power to get*
18. *Wealth?* How few, in their Success, think

of that of the Psalmist; *Promotion cometh*
neither from the East, nor from the West,

Ps. lxxv. *nor from the South. But God is the*

6. *Judge: he putteth down one, and setteth*
up another? How few are they, who

do not set so great a Value upon the Good Things of this Life, as not only to prefer them before the Evil ones of it, but even before the Good Things of another? Few, it may be, will own this, but too many act it: Whatever

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their Judgment be, their Life and Pra- Ser. IX/
 vice is plain. 

But to proceed: To make the Good
 Things of Life compleat and absolute
 Blessings to us, we must make a right
 Use of them, and apply them to the
 Ends for which God bestows them:
 Religion must regulate our Passion for
 them, and refine and purify our Enjoy-
 ment of 'em. The Good Things of this
 World, must inkindle in us the Love
 of the great Author and Donor of
 them; they must raise our Minds up
 to Divine and Heavenly Things; they
 must be, in our hands, Motives to, and
 Means and Instruments of promoting
 the Glory of God, and the Good of
 Man, and encreasing our own Virtue,
 and so consequently, of *laying up a good*
Foundation for the Time to come. With-
 out this, they will be Snares and Temp-
 tations, not Obligations and Favours;
 Punishments, not Blessings; Talents
 that will only encrease our Guilt, and
 swell our Accounts at the Last Day;
For unto whomsoever much is given, of
him much shall be required. The Sum
 of what I have said on my first Ge-
 neral is this; That this Natural, Sen-
 sitive Life, is not considerable, or valua-
 ble in its self, without any farther Pro-
 spect;

Tim. vi.
19.

Luke xii.
48.

VOL. I. I. *spect*; and therefore our Passion for it, and for the Good Things of this World, are to be restrain'd within those Bounds, which Wisdom and Religion set it. Yet,

II. There may be several good Reasons, why a Man may highly value Life, and desire to continue and prolong it. It is true, if a Christian be what he pretends and professes to be, he is certainly fit to die, and Death will certainly make him more Happy, than Life here can; yet even such a one may desire to live for the Honour of G O D, the Good of Man, and the Fruit which will redound to himself in another World, from a long Life in this.

1st, For the Honour of G O D. It seems not so well becoming the Humility and Modesty of a Christian, to be too hasty for his Reward; his Service is little enough, his Reward is great, and he may contentedly wait for it. And it seems no less inconsistent with his Love of, and Zeal for G O D, to be impatient and too forward to quit a Post of Labour and Service, while he is capable or filling it; the Divine Honour being highly interested in our Virtue here, shall I say, more than in our

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Triumph hereafter? It seems a little Ser.IX.
too mean, pusillanimous, and selfish, to
be too importunate for a Release, while
we are capable of advancing the Ho-
nour of G o d, either by an Active or
Suffering Faith. It is true, our Vir-
tue will be more mature and perfect, it
will burn brighter in another World;
but it is as true, that nothing there needs
its Influence; there is nothing there to
be inform'd by its Light, or cherish'd
by its Heat; there are no Infidels to be
convinced, no Sinners to be converted, no
Miserable ones to be succour'd, refresh'd,
or comforted. This Argument I have
learnt from the Words of our Lord
himself: *Which of you having a Servant* Luk. xvii.
ploughing, or feeding Cattle, will say unto 7, 8.
him, by and by, when he is come from the
Field, Go, and sit down to Meat? and will
not rather say unto him, Make ready where-
with I may sup, and gird thy self, and serve
me till I have eaten and drunken; and af-
terward thou shalt eat and drink? Upon
the whole, then, does the Christian seem
to me, to have arriv'd at the Perfection of
St. Paul, when he prefers the Honour of
God, before his own immediate Entrance
into Glory; when he chuses Labour and
Travail in the Body, as long as God can
be magnified by it, rather than Pleasure

VOL. I. out of it; when, finally, he had rather undergo Sufferings and Trials for the sake of G o d, than pass immediately into Security and Rest. This is indeed to prefer the Will of G o d before one's own; never let such a one fear, lest he should miscarry and be put to Shame, either in this World, or the other. Such Faith, such Love, such Zeal as this, can never be forsaken or forgot by G o d; his Goodness, his Honour, and his Faithfulness stand engag'd, as well to support as crown it. To these certainly belong, in the most perfect sense of them, those precious Promises; *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able. God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work and Labour of Love.* These, without Controversy, shall be preserv'd by the Power of G o d, thro' Faith in Christ Jesus; *For these, an Inheritance incorruptible, undefil'd, that fadeth not away, is reserv'd in Heaven.*

1 Cor. x.
13.

Heb. vi.
10.

1 Pet. i. 4.

But you will say; If this be so, how came St. Paul to desire to depart? Or how come the best of Men to be sometimes snatch'd away by a too early Death?

First, As to St. Paul, I Answer, 1st, That this was very natural, he being

being sure that he was then in a State Ser.IX.
of God's Favour; that if he died then,
he should pass immediately into his Pre-
sence, and partake of his Joy and Glory.
How reasonable then was it for him to
desire to die? No doubt the Spiritual
Man does as naturally desire Perfection
and Glory; as the Natural Man dislikes
and shuns Pain and Death, or loves
Ease and Rest; and tho' St. *Paul* well
knew; that the prolonging his Labours,
and repeating his Trials, would increase
his Glory; yet he could not but know
too, that this did import much Toil and
Trouble: Therefore his first Desire
was, to be dissolv'd; but his best and
most perfect Desire was, to continue
here, for the Benefit of Christ's Church.

2^{dly}: That he was, by Revelation,
sure he should die a Martyr, and, by
the same Revelation, that he should not
fail of a Divine Support; therefore he
knew that he should accumulate and ar-
rive at once at that Height, to which
others climb by slow Degrees, if at all.
Martyrdom, in one Act of an Heroic Faith
and Love, equals, if not surmounts, the
Service of numerous Years.

As to others, whom, in the Height
of Virtue and Bloom of Life, God calls
to himself; I Answer,

N 2

1. That

VOL. I. 1. That the Judgments of God are unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out. *He maketh Darkness his Pavilions; thick Clouds are round about him.* Yet,

Rom. xi.

33.

2 Sam.

xxii. 12.

Pl. xcvi.

2.

2. I can't believe, that this early Death, which intercepts the Fruit of a growing Virtue, shall bereave them of any Degree of that Future Glory, to which such Fruits would have entitl'd them: I had rather think, with the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, That having compleated their Perfection in a little Time, they had in a little Time finish'd their Course. But however this Matter be, I am content to believe,

Wisd. iv.

13.

Rom. viii.

28.

3. That as God orders all particular Events of Life, to the Good of those that love him; so much more must he dispose this biggest Event, that can befall a Mortal Man, to their Interest and Benefit. But to return,

Phil. i. 23.

2dly: Charity for Man may be another Inducement to desire the prolonging of Life. This was St. *Paul's* own Reasoning; it was this Consideration which determined his Choice, when he was in Suspense between Life and Death: *I desire, saith he, to depart, and to be with Christ, which for me is far better:* But then immediately retracting what he had said, he goes on thus; *Nevertheless,*

*theless, to abide in the Flesh, is more need- Ser.IX.
ful for you. And having this Confidence, ~~~~~
I know that I shall abide and continue --Ver. 24,
with you all, for your furtherance and 25.
Joy of Faith.* This Argument, indeed,
does especially belong to such as are
Publick Blessings, Burning and Shining
Lights, who want neither Capacity nor
Zeal to do Good: It becomes such as
these to be willing to respite their own
Happiness, that they may contribute to
that of others; but none, who are good
Men, how mean soever their Natural
Parts are, or their Education, can want
Ability to do Good. A lovely Example
is the most moving Eloquence; no Man
can recommend Religion to another
more effectually, than he that feels
the Force and Pleasure of it in himself.
He that is mighty in the Word of
God, and led by his Spirit, can hardly
want Learning enough to instruct or
perswade; but I beseech you remember,
that I speak this only of such as are
truly Good, that is, the Humble, Peace-
ful, Devout and Charitable: Far be it
from me to countenance the Presum-
ptuous and Pretending, the Bold, the
Proud, and the Enthusiast. In a word,
*Our Lord, when Rich, for our sakes be- 2 Cor. viii.
came Poor, that we, through his Poverty, 9.*

VOL. I. *might be made Rich.* St. Paul was willing to become *Anathema*, to save his Country-men; Moses to be blotted out of the Book of G O D, that he might avert the Destruction with which G O D threatned *Israel*. How then dwells the same Spirit in us, if we cannot be content to have our own Salvation delay'd a Moment, for the promoting *that* of others? We are Soldiers of the same Army, and therefore must not be pressing immediately, tho' successful, for the Rewards of Victory, whilst we see others distress'd by the Enemy, if we can succour them. Thus G O D could not think fit that the *Gadites* and *Rubenites* should set up their Rest before their Brethren, but *commanded that they should pass over Arm'd before them*, till their Warfare too was accomplish'd. It is reckon'd amongst Men, the highest Proof of Friendship, to die for another; but were it at one's own Choice to die when one would, and were one assur'd of passing immediately from Death into Heaven, I cannot tell whether it would not be a greater Testimony of our Affection to live, than to die, for our Friends; for this were to postpone our own Happiness, to provide for theirs.

Deut. iii.
18.

3dly:

3dly: The Prospect of that Good Ser.IX.
 which will accrue to ourselves in another
 World, from a long Life well spent in
 this, (*But if I live in the Flesh, this is* Phil.i.22.
the Fruit of my Labour) may very well
 justify our Desire of it. Whatever there
 be in Virtue, that can intitle us to a Re-
 ward; whatever there be of Difficulty
 or Self-denial in it, I may surely affirm,
 is only to be found here. The Future
 State is not a State of Trials and Tem-
 ptations, but of Security and Triumph;
 tis not a State of Mourning and Mor-
 tification, of Toil and Travail, but of
 Rest and Joy. To do the Will of God,
 then, will we but to gratifie our own
 Inclinations; to love and praise him,
 to wait upon and attend him, will be
 nothing else but Enjoyment, Pleasure
 and Transport. It is here therefore, it
 is in this barren Wilderness, it is in this
 State of Warfare, that we must sow in
 Sweat and Tears the Seeds of a future
 Harvest of Joy and Glory. Add to
 this, No Body, I think, doubts but
 that there are Degrees of Happiness
 and Perfection in another Life; St. Paul
 expressly asserts, *He which soweth spa-* 2 Cor.ix.
ringly, shall reap sparingly; and he which 6.
soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.
 From hence then it must follow, the

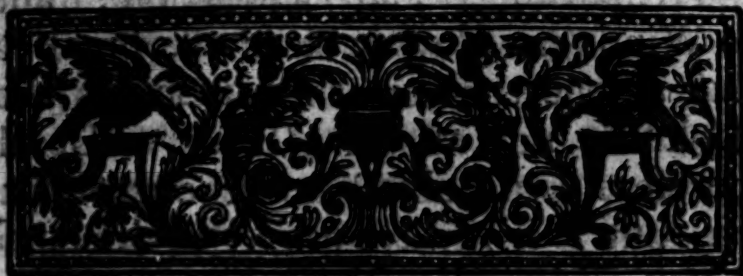
VOL. I. more perfect we are here, the higher will be our Station, and the more surprizing our Beauty there; the greater the Number of our good Works, the greater will be our Pleasure and Glory, and the more Stars will adorn our Crowns. *Length of Days* therefore is a Blessing to a good Man, since he grows so much the more perfect, and does so much the more Good; *For the Path of the Just is as the shining Light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect Day.* Were it not for these Considerations, I could not see how Long Life could be a Blessing to a good Christian; for it would but keep him longer from his Happiness, and delay his Security, Rest and Glory. Were it not for these Considerations, Life would be a very despicable Thing; Virtuous and Good Men would scarcely be able to support themselves under the Trials and Troubles of a declining Age; and we should be at a loss to know, why there appears so little Fondness for Death, in those who are so fit for it.

Prov. iv.
18.

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The End of the Ninth Sermon.

S E R-



SERMON X.

Of the Fear and the Desire of
Death.

[The Second Sermon on this Text.]

PHIL. i. 22, 23.

*Yet what I shall chuse I wot not. For I
am in a strait betwixt two, having a
desire to depart, and to be with Christ;
which is far better.*



It is scarce possible for Vol. I.
a Rational Man to enjoy
Life with any tolerable
Satisfaction and Security,
unless he be in some de-
gree prepar'd for Death;
for Death hangs perpetually over our
Heads, like a Cloud big with Thunder
and

VOL. I, and Lightning, and Destruction; and no Winds can blow it clear off, break it must at one time or other upon us, tho' we know not at what Hour. Death therefore is a Subject never out of season; but it is always proper to discourse to you of it: For the many immature and sudden Deaths that daily happen in the World to the Young and Healthy, are more than enough to convince us, how insecure our Tenure of Life is, even then when we think our selves most sure of it.

I have already, from these Words, shewn you,

1st: From whence the Assurance of the Apostle sprung, namely, from a firm Belief of the Gospel, and particularly of the Goodness of God, and of the Truth and Certainty of his Promises in Christ; from the Proof he had of his own Integrity in the Day of Trial; and from a clear Knowledge of the present State and Disposition of his Soul.

2^{dly}: I treated of the Desire of Life; which, in the Apostle, did not proceed from a Love of the Body, or of the World; but from this Perswasion, that his Life would contribute to the Honour of our Lord, and the Service of his Church.

Church. From hence therefore I took Ser. X.
occasion to insist on two Things; ~~~~~

I. That this Natural Life, consider'd
in it self, cannot deserve to be
greatly valued by a Christian.

II. That the great Ends for which a
Christian should desire to prolong
it, are these; The Honour of God;
the Good of Man; and the Fruit
which he himself shall reap from it
in another World.

I now propose to consider, in this Dis-
course, the Causes of our Fear of Death,
or Unconcernment at the Approach of it.

I. Of our Fear of Death. And here,
I intend not to speak of that Natural
Aversion to Death which is implanted in
all of us, and which the very best are
not without, till they have conquer'd it,
by a right Use of their Reason, and a
true Sense of Religion; but of that Fear
which springs from our own Opinions
and Actions. And this may be consider'd
as proceeding from one or other of these
three Causes; either,

1. Infidelity: Or,

2. Wickedness: Or,

Lastly, The Defectiveness of our Re-
ligion.

1. In-

Vol. I. *Book I.* Infidelity. He that believes no
 ~~~~~ other World, will naturally make the  
 most of this; and because he must daily  
 grow more Sensual and Worldly, he may  
 very well reason, as they are represented  
 doing by the Wise Man: *Come on there-  
 fore, let us enjoy the good Things that are  
 present, and let us speedily use the Crea-  
 tures like as in Youth. Let us fill our  
 selves with costly Wine and Oynments:  
 and let no Flower of the Spring pass by  
 us. Let us crown our selves with Rose-  
 buds, before they be wither'd. Let none  
 of us go without his Part of our Voluptu-  
 ousness; let us leave Tokens of our Joy-  
 fulness in every Place; for this is our  
 Portion, and our Lot is this.* St. Paul  
 himself thinks this the Natural Re-  
 sult of Infidelity, *Let us eat and drink, for  
 to Morrow we die.* These Men, that make  
 the World their All, will naturally en-  
 deavour to hold it fast; for when that goes,  
 all those things they lov'd and delight-  
 ed in must go with it, and they have no  
 Notion nor Belief of any other. To  
 these therefore, *O Death, bitter must be  
 thy remembrance;* and yet these are  
 those who pretend to be the great Pa-  
 trons of Liberty, and Masters of Plea-  
 sure. Miserable Wretches! that having  
 no

Wisd. ii.  
6-9

1 Cor. xv.  
32.

Ecclus.  
xli. 1.

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no Support in Death, nor no Security Ser. X.  
in Life, can never free themselves but  
by Thoughtfulness and Forgetfulness, or  
by believing the most monstrous Absur-  
dities, from those Fears, which innume-  
rable Accidents that befall others, and  
may every Hour befall them, create in  
em.

2. A Wicked Man, whose Life has  
been a Contradiction to his Belief, has  
great reason to fear Death. If Death  
come before his Work be done, he is lost  
for ever; there is no room for Wisdom  
or Repentance in the Grave; nor will  
the Tenders of Grace and Mercy be re-  
new'd to those in another Life, who  
have slighted and rejected them in this.  
In vain shall he desire *to see one of the* Luk. xvii.  
22.  
*Days of the Son of Man*, for he shall ne-  
ver see one; but is pass'd from a Day of  
Grace, to a Day of Wrath. How terri-  
ble is Judgment, to one whose Accounts  
are great? How terrible G o d, to one  
who has violated his Commands, abus'd  
his Talents, and *turn'd his Grace into* Jude 4.  
*Lasciviousness*? How terrible Eternity,  
in which no Friends, no Comfort, but  
*Tribulation and Anguish, Weeping, and*  
*Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth*? One  
while such a one would fain stifle, or de-



**VOL. I.** delude his Conscience; but it cannot be; his Guilt is too notorious to be denied; too great to be palliated; and Conscience is enrag'd, and can't be appeas'd. Another while he would fain prolong Life; and call back the Day of Grace; but, alas, his Fears and Despondencies will not let him Pray, and he is come to that Time now, in which Solomon and the Psalmist represent God inexorable, *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For this shall every one that is Godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found; surely in the Floods of great Waters they shall not come nigh unto him.* Sometimes he tries to hope even against Hope; but his own Heart condemns him, and he cannot discover the least Glimpse of Light, in the Darknes and Horror of an approaching Death. *Lastly,* He would, if he could, believe no God, nor no Judgment to come; he is well enough inclin'd to wish the Gospel were a cunningly-devis'd Fable: But Reason cannot now be put off with a Jest; he cannot now answer Arguments with Raillery; he is now convinced of those Truths which he would not see nor think on before. O dread-

Prov. i.

28.

Psalm.

xxxii.

6.

dreadful Conviction, which serves only Ser. X.  
to pierce the Heart with Terror and  
Despair! Ah! *Let us break off our Sins*  
*by Righteousness* betimes, and our *Iniqui-*  
*ties, by showing Mercy to the Poor,* and  
so will we be secure that this Evil Day  
shall never come upon us.

Dan. iv.  
27.

3. Imperfect and weak Christians  
cannot be free from the Fear of Death,  
altho' they be not oppress'd by the Ter-  
rors of it. I call those Weak and Imper-  
fect, whose Faith is mix'd with Doubts  
and Scruples, which, tho' they do not  
overthrow it, do very much weaken the  
Influence of it; who are not so well as-  
sur'd of their own Hearts and Lives, as  
to be able to pronounce confidently of  
their own State; or who, lastly, do  
not understand the Gospel-Terms of Sal-  
vation so clearly as they should.

*First:* There are some, who, tho' they  
believe the Gospel, and the Rewards  
and Punishments of another Life, yet  
their Belief is not free from Doubts now  
and then. Sometimes they stumble at  
Passages in the Bible, hard to be un-  
derstood, or hard to be reconcil'd to one  
another. Sometimes they doubt of the  
Immortality of the Soul; and sometimes  
are concern'd at the Dissolution and  
Corruption

**VOL. I.** Corruption of the Body; and sometimes their Notions about their future State, both before and after the Resurrection, are so obscure and confus'd, that they cannot work so strongly upon them as they would otherwise do; and on these Accounts, tho' they submit to the Will of God, and die in some degree of Peace and Hope, yet they can neither desire Death before it comes, nor meet it when it does come, with a full Assurance.

There is but one way to cure these of their uneasy Fears, and that is, by perswading them to do all they can to grow strong in the Faith, and directing them how they may do so; that is,

Luk. xvii.

5.  
Mark ix.

24.

*1<sup>st</sup>, By Prayer; Lord, increase our Faith. Lord, I believe; help thou my Unbelief.*

*2<sup>dly</sup>: By walking more strictly, and acting more diligently: For the Holier a Man grows; the better will be his Understanding; the more Spiritual any Man grows, the better able will he be to discern and judge of Spiritual Things.*

*3<sup>dly</sup>: He must consider and study the Evidences which God has given us of the Truth of the Gospel; and if he be not qualified to enter into a thorough Examination of all of them, he may*

con-



content himself for a while with reflecting on this one, That the Gospel is the Doctrine of Godliness, and therefore must be the Doctrine of Truth and Life. For besides, that false Principles can never lead us to true Holiness, and that Impostures must ever have some corrupt End; I say, besides both these Considerations, 'tis impossible that Men should become Holy without a Divine Assistance; or, that being Holy, they should be displeasing or unacceptable to G O D.

*Secondly*, There are others who cannot pronounce confidently of their Hearts and Lives; for tho' they do not live in any Wickedness, yet the Good they do is inconsiderable. Tho' they have repented of their Sins, and are restrain'd from them by the Fear of G O D; yet their Zeal, their Love, their Diligence in that which is Good, is very defective; they are far from that Spiritual and Heavenly Frame the Gospel exhorts them to, and want that deep and affecting Sense of G O D which they ought always to bear upon their Minds. In a word, their Degrees of Holiness are so low, their Omissions so many, their Religious Performances so very different from what they would have them; and

**Vol. 1.** it may be their falls, tho' not often, yet many and often enough, to disquiet them. It is no wonder now, if such as these are not over-confident of themselves; 'tis no wonder if Death raise Qualms and Disturbances in these. For Eternity is a Matter of the highest Importance, and the least Doubt about it, cannot fail to give a very great Uneasiness.

The only Remedy I can prescribe to these, is this, That they should use greater Diligence to the full Assurance of Hope unto the end; that they should labour to add one degree of Grace and Virtue to another, that hereby they may make their Calling and Election sure; that they should not only flee Evil, but every Appearance of it; that they should not only cease to do Evil, but learn to do well; that they should not only do Good, but do it more abundantly; that they should retire often, pray without ceasing, and resort frequently to the Lord's Supper, which is the true Food of Life, Nourishment of Souls, and the Manna that is suited to every Taste, and equally fitted for the Weak and Strong.

Thirdly, Some are afraid of Death, because they do not thoroughly and clearly understand the Gospel-Terms or Conditions

Heb. vi.

11.

2 Pet. i.

10.

tions of Life, they do not distinguish Ser. X,  
between Perfection and Sincerity, be-  
tween Wilful and Presumptuous Wicked-  
ness, and Sins of Infirmary; or it may  
be, they know not what a saving Belief  
and Saving Repentance is; I mean, they  
do not so fully and clearly understand  
this as they should; or it may be, they  
do not rightly comprehend how far the  
Promise of the Pardon of Sin may be ex-  
tended, whether there be not some Sins  
and some States which are excluded from  
it; and if there be, they are apt to be  
very jealous, lest their State and their  
Sins be of that sort. Now when this is  
the Case, 'tis almost impossible that such  
as these should not be disturb'd and dis-  
quieted by the Fears of Death. The  
Fear of it is of very great Use to them,  
and ought to push them on to greater  
Diligence and Watchfulness; it ought  
to excite them to greater Industry in the  
Study of the Scriptures, and to more  
earnest Endeavours of *making their Calling  
and Election sure*. These Fears ought  
certainly not to deaden and discourage  
the Endeavour of any; for this is evi-  
dent, that it must be better with those  
that go on striving, than with such as  
yield and fall down under them.



**VOL. I.** I come now, in the second Place, to consider those who are Fearless or Desirous of Death; and these are of three Sorts. For,

1<sup>st</sup>: This Fearlessness, in some, springs from meer Stupidity and Insensibility.

2<sup>dly</sup>, In others, it springs from false Principles.

3<sup>dly</sup>, Some, and I doubt but few there are, who really desire Death, or meet it joyfully, upon reasonable and solid Grounds.

1. Some meet it stupidly; and tho' they may not be said to desire it, cannot be said to fear it. It is not unusual for Men to die as they live, and to exert as little Thought and Reflexion in Death as they did in Life, Vice corrupts a Man's Nature; and he that is long accustomed to live by Fancy and Humour, becomes at length incapable of making any true use of his Reason. If it were not thus; if Men, by long Custom of Sin, did not cease to be Rational, I mean as to Spiritual and Eternal Things, how could it ever be, that they should come

*Ila. v. 20. to call Good Evil, and Evil Good? that they should put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes? that they should either really think that there is no God,*

no

no Providence, no Judgment to come, Ser. X. or at least, that they should act as if they did think so? How is it possible that they should be so insensible, so forgetful of Things of such an Importance? Now when Men come to this, 'tis but too common that Diseases and Death cannot awaken them out of their Lethargy; no Arguments, no Dispensations can revive one Spark of true Reason or Wisdom in them. Besides, how common is it, and how natural for such Men, to have their Minds wholly taken up about the Care of the Body? How willing are they to entertain Hopes of Recovery, to the last Moment; and how averse to the Thoughts of Death? How fond are they of any thing that can divert or alleviate the Uneasiness that a Sense of their Condition must inevitably cause in them? and how unfit to think, to examine, to reflect, if they did set themselves about it?

*Lastly,* A long Custom of Sin does not only wear out all Sense of its Loathsomeness, but makes it appear agreeable and eligible; so that at length the Man comes to think that there is no Guilt nor Provocation in it; and 'tis easy to see, that nothing will trouble such as these, except the Pain or Sickness of the

**Vol. I.** Body, or parting with those things that pleas'd them in this World, till they shall be rouz'd by the amazing Terrors that will surprize them in another Life. Thus far of those who die Stupidly,

2. Some desire it, or at least meet it without any Disturbance, upon very false Principles. Such are, *that* which I mention'd before, an Opinion that there's no Deformity and Provocation in Sin, or that nothing is Sinful, but what is scandalously and enormously so; that there's no Anger and Wrath in G O D; that it will fare with them as with the rest of the World; and that if they are not the best of Men, neither are they the worst; that all that is necessary to entitle us to Mercy is, to confess that we have liv'd ill, and to beg G O D, for Christ's sake, to forgive us; and to be confident that he will do so, however we have liv'd till then.

Some again consider Death no otherwise than as it is common to all Men, and they think it reasonable enough to submit to what they cannot avoid. 'Tis true, this is a Reflexion that may contribute something to lay the Disturbances of the Mind when Death approaches; but this alone is a very poor Argument against



against the Fear of Death; they ought Ser. XV  
to think that 'tis as true, that all Men  
must be Judged, as all must Die. 'Tis  
true, the Son of Sirach makes use of this  
Argument, *Fear not the Sentence of Ecclesiastic  
Death: remember them that have been* 3. 28.  
*before thee, and that come after: for*  
*this is the Sentence of the Lord over all*  
*Flesh.* But then he joyns another with  
it, *And why art thou against the Pleasure* --- Ver. 4  
*of the most High? There's no Enquiry in*  
*the Grace, whether thou have liv'd Ten,*  
*or an Hundred, or a Thousand Years.* This  
insinuates plainly, that the Enquiry of the  
Last Day will not be about the Length,  
but the Goodness of our Lives; and that  
if we have liv'd well, we have no reason  
to be troubled for not living long.

Others there are that meet Death  
calmly enough, because they see no  
thing that can make it worth their  
while to desire Life. Life is a dull  
Round of the same Actions, a flat Re-  
petition of the same Tasteless Enjoy-  
ments. As the Preacher says, *The thing* Ecclef. i.  
*that hath been, it is that which shall be;* 9. 10.  
*and that which is done, is that which*  
*shall be done: and there's no new thing*  
*under the Sun.* Is there any thing, where-  
of it may be said, See, this is new? it  
hath been already of old time, which

**VOL. I.** *was before us.* Their Fancy flags, their  
 Body decays, their Spirit sinks, they  
 find nothing now in Company, in Feasts,  
 in Musick, but, like *Barzillai*, are unable  
 to discern between Good and Evil, to taste  
 what they eat, or what they drink, and  
 to bear the Voice of Singing-Men and  
 Singing-Women: Therefore, since they  
 can no longer live pleasurably, they pro-  
 pose to themselves no more than to die  
 quietly.

*Lastly*, There are some, who seem  
 even to desire Death, not that there is  
 any thing agreeable in it, but because  
 they are sick of Life: They flee from  
 Calamities and Distresses, from Poverty  
 and Reproach, from Gouts and Stone, &c.  
 to the Harbour of the Grave; the pre-  
 sent is so bad, they think the future can-  
 not be worse, and are willing to hope it  
 may be better, without examining what  
 Ground they have to think so; accord-  
 ing to that of the Son of *Sirach*, *O Death,*  
*acceptable is thy Sentence unto the Needy,*  
*and unto him whose Strength faileth, that*  
*is now in the last Age, and is vex'd with*  
*all things, and to him that despaireth, and*  
*hath lost Patience.* Nay, it may be they car-  
 ry their Thoughts no farther than that in  
*Job*, *There the Wicked cease from Trou-*  
*bling, and there the Weary be at Rest.*

*Job iii.*  
*17, 18,*  
*19.*

*There*

There the Prisoners rest together, they Ser. X.  
bear not the Voice of the Oppressor. The  
Small and Great are there; and the Servant  
is free from his Master. And I perswade my  
self, the Loss of Friends, the Falshood and  
Perfidiousness, the Ingratitude, Injustice,  
and Wickedness of Mankind, is enough  
to disgust any one to Life, and reconcile  
him to Death, if either he lay these  
things much to Heart, or be not very  
doubtful of his own State hereafter.

Thus far of such as do not fear  
Death, either through Stupidity, or  
false Grounds.

3<sup>dly</sup>: There are others who don't  
only not fear Death, but desire it, and  
that for very plain and good Reasons.  
These are Two:

1. Because they firmly believe there is  
another Life far more happy than this.

2. Because they are well assur'd they  
shall have a Share in that Happiness.

1. The Belief of another Life, &c.  
That there is a Resurrection, this I need  
not prove, because 'tis every where  
asserted, because the Resurrection of  
Christ to judge the World does im-  
ply it, because 'tis represented as the  
Day of Retribution, as that which will be  
an abundant Vindication of the Righte-  
ousness of God, and of the Wisdom of  
Good



**VOL. I.** Good Men, who persevere patient in Well-  
*doing*, through the Hope and Expecta-  
 tion of it. This Consideration, if the  
 Soul died with the Body, is enough to  
 make Death very welcome to a good  
 Man, whenever God calls him to it;  
 because this puts an End to all his Trials,  
 this finishes his Warfare, and compleats  
 and secures his Victory. He is sure to  
 receive a *Crown of Righteousness*, he  
 is sure, when Christ comes, he *shall*  
*appear with him in Glory*. It was this Af-  
 surance that made him *steadfast* and *im-*  
*moveable* in Labours and Temptations:  
 How much more may this Assurance sup-  
 port and comfort him in Death? The  
 Distance between Death and the Resur-  
 rection cannot seem tedious to him;  
 for, upon the Supposition I have made  
 before, he cannot be sensible of it. Now  
 therefore he may sing his Song of Vi-  
 ctory with Joy and Confidence, he may  
 congratulate himself upon both the past  
 and future, his past Travails and his  
 future Expectations; *I have fought a*  
*good Fight, I have finished my Course, I*  
*have kept the Faith. Henceforth there*  
*is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness,*  
*which the Lord, the righteous Judge,*  
*shall give me at that Day: and not unto*  
*me only, but unto all them also that love*  
*his Appearing.* But

Co'oss. iii.

4.

2 Tim. iv.  
7, 8.

But besides this, the Immortality of *Ser. X.*  
 the Soul, in a separate State, and the  
 Happiness of it, if a man die in the Fa-  
 vour of G o d, is another branch of  
 our Faith: This Doctrine seems to me  
 to be taught very plainly in this Text,  
 and 2 Cor. v. for in both Places the  
 Apostle teaches us these Two Things,  
 and assigns them as the Reason why he  
 desires Death. 1. That the Soul is not  
 extinguish'd in Death, 'tis not dissolv'd  
 with the Body. But that, 2. It passes  
 into another World, into the Presence  
 of Christ. Thus here, *Having a desire*  
*to depart*: Why does he call Death a  
 Departure, if the Soul were dissolv'd  
 or extinguish'd with the Body? But in  
 the Place I mention'd out of his Epistle  
 to the *Corinthians*, he calls the Separate  
 State of the Soul, a State of *Absence*  
*from the Body*. But this is not all, *Ha-*  
*ving a Desire*, saith he, *to depart, and*  
*to be with Christ*. There is a Presence  
 of Christ with good Men, even while  
 they are in the Body; a Presence of his  
 Holy Spirit, *where two or three are met* *Mat. xviii*  
*together in his Name*; a Presence of *20.*  
 Faith and Love mention'd by St. *John*;  
*He that abideth in me, and I in him.* *John xv.*  
 But the Presence of Christ, St. *Paul* here  
 mentions, is of another Nature, even  
 his



Vol. I his Presence in Heaven in his Glorified Body; the one the Presence of *Faith*, the other of *Sight*; or else he could not say, That when he should be *present with the Lord*, he should be *absent from the Body*; nor could he say, that the one were *far better* than the other; nor desire to pass from the one into the other. These Expressions do besides prove, that the Soul of a good Man, in the Presence of Christ, is not in a State of Sleep, Inactivity, Insensibleness, but in a State of Pleasure. Why else should the Apostle desire to die, that he might enjoy this Presence? Or how could it be *Gain to die*? The participating the Spirit of Christ in the Body, is *far better* than Sleep and Insensibility in Heaven; enjoying Christ by Faith and Love, is better than not enjoying him at all; 1 Pet. i. 8. *the rejoicing with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*, while in the Body, is far better than a State of Sleep and Inactivity, be it where it will. 'Tis plain then, that the Immortality of the Soul, in the Presence and Joy of our Master, and the Resurrection of the Body, are Doctrines that afford much Comfort and Joy, and render Death not only not frightful, but even desirable; To me to die is *Gain*; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ,



*Christ, which is far better.* But it must Ser. X.  
be suppos'd,

2dly: That none can thus desire Death, unless they are assur'd, upon rational Grounds, of having their Share of this Happiness in another Life. This was the Case of St. Paul, as appears ver. 20. *According to my earnest Expectation and my Hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed: but that with all boldness as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my Body, whether it be by Life or by Death.* And in 2 Cor. v. he expresses himself thus, ver. 6, 7, 8. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing, that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by Faith, not by Sight) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.*

I have shewn you in a former Discourse, what Ground such Assurance must be built upon, namely, a firm Perswasion of the Goodness of God, and of the Truth and Certainty of his Promises in Christ, and Experience of our Integrity in the Day of Trial, and of a Zeal and Diligence in doing Good, and an evident Knowledge that we are led by the Spirit of God, that we are influenced and acted by Faith  
and

**V**ORSE and Love, by Zeal for God's Glory, and a high Esteem of Righteousness and Holiness. I shall not therefore add any thing on this Subject; only observe to you, that is is one thing to be in a State of Grace, another to be fully assur'd that we are so. All that are sincere, even the weak Babes and Beginners, are in a State of Grace; but the Strong and Adult only can be rationally assur'd that they are so: The former have Hope, but 'tis mix'd with Doubt and Fear; the latter have Confidence or Assurance, that abounds with Joy and Peace; and all that are Sincere, as they grow in Grace and Virtue, will grow in Hope: Their Fear and Doubts will be dispell'd, and Hope will be ripen'd into Assurance; *for perfect Love casteth out Fear.*

1 John iv.  
18.

Having thus consider'd the full Extent of the Text, I now proceed to make some Inferences from what has been already said, and then shall dismiss this Subject.

1<sup>st</sup> then, It may from hence be inferr'd, What it is for a Christian to Live.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That it becomes a Christian; tho' not to prefer Death, whilst he is capable of doing Good in Life, yet to welcome it when it comes.

3<sup>dly</sup>,

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**Ser. X.**  
 1. **34y.** We may from hence learn the  
 Excellence of the Christian Religion.  
 Add, **35y.** How far we are sunk beneath  
 the Perfection which Christianity calls  
 for. **What it is for a Christian to Live.**  
 To Live, is not merely to multiply our  
 Days, or to endure and continue in Be-  
 ing; but if we will speak properly, and  
 not fall in with vulgar Errors, to Live,  
 is to exert the Powers and Faculties of  
 Rational Creatures, enlightned by Re-  
 velation, and assisted by Grace, to em-  
 ploy our selves in such Actions, and to  
 entertain our selves with such Enjoy-  
 ments as become the Excellence and  
 Dignity of our Nature. This is so evi-  
 dent, that it needs not to be prov'd.  
 What is it for the Heart, and Spirits, and  
 Blood to live, but to move and actuate  
 the Body, and perform those other  
 Offices which they are naturally fit for?  
 What is it for our Senses to live, but to  
 exert the Acts of Sensation proper to  
 them? What then must it be for the  
 Soul to live, but to understand and will,  
 to exercise and employ it self in the  
 Search, Contemplation and Pursuit of  
 Truth and Goodness; God and Christ  
 Jesus, Righteousness, and a Judgment  
 to



**Vol. I.** to come, being Objects as natural to the Faculties of our Souls, as Colour, Figure, Sound, &c. to the Sensitive Organs of our Bodies. Nor do I contend, that Life consists only in Action, but also in Enjoyment; but then this ought to be of a Nature proper and suitable to our Beings. So that, in short, for a Rational Creature to live, is to do the Works for which he was Created and Redeem'd, for which the Gifts of Nature and Grace qualify and enable him, and to entertain himself with all those Pleasures which God has made him capable of in this Life, or given him a Prospect of in another. This is the proper Notion of Life; and if in this Sense we desire to live, it is a Desire becoming a Christian.

*2dly.* That it becomes a Christian, tho' not to prefer Death, whilst he is capable of doing Good in Life, yet to welcome it when it comes; because God now puts an end to our Trials and Warfare; our Souls pass immediately out of the Body, into the Presence of Christ; and, in the Resurrection of the Just, we shall be put into Possession of Consummate Happiness. Now, if this be so, we are afraid only of Words and Vulgar Opinions; we fear Death, when

we

we cannot die; and are solicitous about Ser. X.  
this Mortal Life, which we cannot lose  
or exchange but for a more vigorous, vi-  
tal, and happy one.

3<sup>dly</sup>: The Excellence of the Chri-  
stian Religion. This teaches us what it  
is to live, and what it is to die; this  
teaches us how to maintain the Dignity  
of Life, and to enjoy Tranquillity in  
Death; this shews us what are the De-  
signs and Actions, that can deserve to  
employ the Life of Wise and Rational  
Creatures, and how we may be fortify'd  
against the Fears of Death. What the  
Philosophy of the Heathens only talk'd  
of; what no Excellence of Nature, no  
Pre-eminence of Birth, no Greatness of  
Fortune, no Genteelness of Education,  
could ever give, that Christianity does,  
which inspires the Christian with Wis-  
dom in Life, and Courage in Death.

4<sup>thly</sup>: We may here learn, how far  
we are generally sunk beneath the  
Heights and Perfections of true Christi-  
anity, and how weak the Influence, and  
ineffectual the Force of its Principles is  
upon us. Which of us has Faith or  
Hope enough, to desire to die? Or  
which of us has Zeal, or Charity, or  
Wisdom enough, to live for the Glory  
of God, or the Good of our Neigh-  
bour,

*Vol. Labour, or the laying up Treasure for our selves in Heaven?* Who is there amongst us, that knows what it is to live? Or thinks these I have nam'd, the only solid Reasons for the Desire of Life? Who is there amongst us that is ready and willing to put off the Body, to enter into his *Canaan*, and exchange his heavy, mortal Life, for a more free, active and blisful one? No, no; Death is a Terror to us, we tremble at the Thoughts of it, we bewail it in others as the greatest Evil, and shun it more than Shame and Poverty, more than Sin and Folly, whenever, tho' at a Distance, it menaces our selves; and yet 'tis evident this our Fear of Death can proceed from nothing but want of Faith or Hope, or the Excess of Love for this World. The want of Faith makes us no Christians; the want of Hope and Love of another World, or too much Love of this, makes us very bad ones, at least very weak ones. I'll not now suppose any here guilty of Infidelity, but speak to the other two Defects.

How inconsistent is the Love of this World, with all the glorious Pretences of our Christianity? Our Nature is laps'd, fallen and broken, incapable of perfect Virtue or perfect Happiness here, and



and we are unwilling that the Soul Ser. X. should be set at Liberty, and acquire a Vigour that shall never fail, and Pleasures in the Enjoyment of his God and Creator that shall never satiate, but be always new, always ravishing. We profess that our Kingdom is not of this World; that our Life is but a Pilgrimage upon Earth; and yet we are unwilling to go to our Country, and enter into Possession of our Kingdom. We pretend that 'tis our great Aim to become truly Good, and to be transform'd into the Image and Glory of Jesus; and we complain of this Body, as full of Aversions to Godliness, and Propensions to Evil; and of this World, as full of Discouragements from the one, and Temptations to the other: and yet we will not put off the Body, to become pure, bright, and free Spirits; nor quit this World to gain another, *wherein dwells Righteousness*. These things must needs seem to us very incongruous and incompatible with one another.

But if you say, you want Assurance that this shall be your Lot after Death: I answer, If you serve God, why cannot you hope in him? Is it not inconsistent with his Faithfulness and Goodness, not to reward those who diligently

2 Pet. iii.  
13.

Heb. xi. 6

**VOL. I.** *seek him?* If you love him, why should you not desire to be with him? Why should you not be confident that you shall be with him? Since the Apostle teaches us, this makes that Union between God and us, *which neither Life, nor Death,*

Rom. viii.  
38. *nor things present, nor things to come,* can divide. But I know from whence your guilty Fears proceed; and wonder not at them. We dream or fool-away, we drink or sport away Life, we live only by Sense, or by an infatuated Imagination; that is, we have given up our selves to Luxury or Uncleanneſs, to Pride or Ambition, to Ostentation or Impertinence; or which is altogether as bad, to Discontent and Melancholy, to Distrust and Anxiety; and when we come to die, begin sadly to reflect, that, properly speaking, we have never liv'd; our Souls ever rusting in the Scabbard of the Body, or pressed down by sluggish Weights, or cover'd with perpetual Night and Sleep, have never exerted any Vital Motions, have never testified any Passion, any Value for Truth and Goodness, or God the Author of both. We neither love nor serve him truly as we ought, but are Luke-warm, and *halt between God and Baal; are conform'd to this World, and not transform'd by the renewing*

Rom. xii.  
2.

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*ing of our Minds :* And it is upon this Ser. X. account that we despond, and are dejected in our Minds ; we durst not look Death in the Face, because we durst not abide the coming of our Judge. Ah ! what Death can be suppos'd to end such a Life, but a stupid or distracted one, a raging or a lethargick one!

*The End of the Tenth Sermon.*





ing of our minds. And it is upon this Ser. X.  
 account that we depend, and are delect-  
 ed in our minds, we shall not look  
 Death in the face, because we shall not  
 abide the coming of our Judge. And  
 what Death can be expected to end such  
 a life, but a stupor or distracted one.

The End of the Tenth Sermon.

16JY61



# SERMON XI.

Concerning the Resurrection of  
the Body.

[Preach'd at the Funeral of Mrs. Bonner.]

EZEKIEL xxxvii. 3.

*And he said unto me, Son of Man, can  
these Bones live? And I answered,  
O Lord God, thou knowest.*



WE have here presented to VOL. I.  
our Eyes, what *Ezekiel* saw  
in a Vision, by the infus'd  
Light of the Spirit, one  
of the Spoils and Trophies  
of Death, *dry Bones*; and we, who are  
now the Spectators, shall shortly be  
the Matter of a like Conquest. The  
Strength of all of us is wasting daily,  
P 4 and

VOL. I. and hastening to this last Defeat; so that it becomes a Matter as well of Self-interest, as of Kindness to our Deceas'd Friend, to enquire whether these Bones can live, *Son of Man, &c.* I shall shew,

I. That a full and clear Discovery of a Resurrection, is beyond the Reach of Reason meerly Natural, *Can these Bones live?* Yet that,

II. We have the strongest Reason to believe it that we can desire, *O Lord God, thou knowest.*

I. That a full Discovery, &c. There is a two-fold Resurrection, the one of the Soul from Sin; Sin being of that fatal Nature, that it makes Immortality it self stoop to Death. And this is it which, in the *Revelations*, is called the *Rev. xx.* *first Resurrection; Blessed and holy is he who bath part in the first Resurrection.* There is a Second, when this Body, now to be deliver'd to the Inclosures of the Grave, shall be loosed from the Bands of Death, and the Imprisonment of the Grave, by the Power of an Almighty GOD; and being united to the Soul, whose Separation was its Death, shall stand in the Presence of *the Judge* of



*of the whole Earth.* And of this Latter Ser. XI. Resurrection, or Renewed Life, the Discourse is now intended.

The great Argument, by which the Heathen Philosophers endeavour'd to render Death less terrible, or indeed pleasant, was this: They were sensible of the unhappy Effects, which did result from the Union of the Soul and Body, perceiving the Light of the Understanding clouded by the Flesh, the Will quite captivated by, or at least still warring and striving with the Affections of the Flesh; and then, next, they were sensible how the Soul suffer'd in the Disorders of the Body, and tho' Spiritual, was, in some Sense, wounded in its Strokes, did burn in its Fevers, freeze in its Agues, and languish in its Consumption and Decay; so close an Union not suffering the one to be exempt from sympathizing with the Disorders of the other. Hence they concluded, that a Separation from this Body would be the Soul's greatest Happiness, as being an Enlargement from its Prison, an Exemption from its Disorders; the Soul being of it self an Understanding and an Impassable Being. And so they concluded, the Body should never return from that Corruption Death

be-

**Vol. I.** bequeaths it to; supposing, that the Soul would have an Aversion from it, as its Jail and Torment; and that a Reunion would be altogether inconsistent with its Happiness.

But could the Light of Nature suppose a Resurrection necessary, it would be hard for meer Reason to conceive it likely; for that the Grave should be the Tiring-Room for Heaven, that Corruption should be the Seed-Plot of Eternity, that the scatter'd Atoms of our Bodies should be reunited, and what had suffer'd a total Corruption, should be restor'd to its Primitive State; nay more, how Flesh and Blood should be rais'd immortal, how we should resume Humanity without its Frailties, Imperfections and Necessities; and how Corporeal Nature should be refin'd almost into Angelical Purity; was a Thing too hard for the Eye of Reason to discover. And if we consider the Case of the *Ἀνθρωποφάγοι*, who mutually prey upon each other, *whose Throats* were, in a literal sense, *an open Sepulchre*, allowing their Friends no Burial but their own Bowels; it will be most difficult for Nature to conceive, how each Body can be restor'd the same and entire, when it is evident, that this  
Body

Body becomes the Nutriment and Substance of a Second, and this again the Integral Part of a Third. In a word, This, as all other Points propos'd to be the Objects of our Faith, do scorn the highest Flights of the most soaring and elevated Reason; being a Discovery of the Secrets of Heaven, no way to be discover'd, but by a Revelation from Heaven; which should make us ready to submit our Reason, and be glad that it hath pleas'd the Almighty to discover his Mysteries: So that we have reason to believe, what we can't by Reason comprehend or attain to.

And that we have the greatest Reason to believe a Resurrection, that possibly we can desire, is what I now come to shew, in the 2<sup>d</sup> Place.

II. How unreasonable it is to disallow of any Article of Faith, because our Reason cannot fathom it, will easily appear. How many Appearances and Effects in Nature baffle the most curious Enquirer? the greatest part of every Science not admitting of any clear Demonstration. So that he that will have his Faith only, like *Didymus*, at his Fingers Ends, John xx. will trust no farther than he can see, 24, 25. and believe nothing but upon Demonstration



Vol. I. stration of Reason, must be Sceptick in Philosophy, as well as Heretick in Divinity. He must put off his Nature, and deny himself to have a Soul, because he cannot see it, or handle it; nay, he must come to that pass at last, as to deny his own Senses, because he cannot give a Rational Account of every thing he sees and hears. The greatest Pretender to Reason cannot give me a Satisfactory Account of the Principle of Motion in the Mariner's Needle, the Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea; cannot tell me how the Load-stone attracts Iron, or how or what kind of Motion of little Bodies works those various Effects visible in our Passions; nor how his own Soul actuates any one Limb of his Body. And if Reason be so dim-sighted in those Things which seem proportion'd to her, if she cannot fathom the common Works of Nature; is it fit that Heaven should receive Boundaries and Laws from it? that the Secrets of G o d should be arraign'd at our Tribunal, and every Article of our Faith should be rejected as unreasonable, which we can't give a Reason for?

It is not fit to conceive, that the Infinite Power of G o d must be limited to what we can comprehend. We cannot

con-

conceive but that it is as easie to repair *Ser. XI.*  
this Fabrick, as erect it out of Nothing:  
Corruption is but the reducing of Things  
into that Chaos, out of which the Hand  
of God form'd Things in the Beginning;  
Creation, after the rude and jarring Mass  
of Beings was first made, was the order-  
ly digesting of each Form to its due  
Matter; the Resurrection will be the  
reuniting of Things thus decay'd into  
their old Confusion. And there being  
nothing which is reduc'd into Nothing,  
but resolv'd into the first Matter, which  
was the Subject of all Things, we cannot  
deny the Resurrection, and embrace the  
Creation, unless we think the Deity  
itself grows old, and deny him the same  
Power which we attributed to him  
long ago. Nor ought we to believe it  
impossible to God to separate and di-  
stinguish each Particle of us, when  
moulder'd into common Dust, or by many  
Transmutations chang'd into other Bo-  
dies, when Art, which comes far short  
of Nature, can resolve Compound Bo-  
dies into their Simple Principles. For  
ought I can see, the Conservation of this  
World in the State it is, is an Act of as  
high a Power as Creation: And if we  
will mind Things well, we see a Re-  
surrection every Spring; and there be-  
ing

Vol. I. ing nothing new in the World, it is evident, that all is but a Series of the same Beings, one while dying, and another time rising. So then the first Matter of all Things continues the same, and only shifts its Form as we our Cloaths; and it is impossible that any Being in the Theatre of this World should so personate another, that the G O D of Nature should not distinguish it under any Vizard whatsoever; especially considering, that there is no Action within the Verge of Nature, perform'd without the Concourse of the G O D of Nature; there being nothing done without Motion, of which the Source and Fountain is G O D. For this Reason it was, that he was thought, by the Ancient Heathens, to be the *Anima Mundi*; and indeed if the *Cartesian* Principle be true, That the whole World is nothing but unactive Matter regulated by Motion; it will clearly follow, upon supposal that this Matter is not resolvable into Nothing, and that Motion doth flow and spring from G O D, that the Funeral of the whole World will be, when G O D doth for a time Eclipse his Light, and restrain his Influence of Motion; and that the Resurrection will be nothing else, but  
the



the Display and Irradiation of his Face Ser. XI.  
again: So that GOD must cease to be  
GOD, e'er it can be impossible for him  
to give a new Birth and Resurrection to  
dry and languish'd Nature.

A Man would think, to prove the Re-  
surrection by Scripture, were needless;  
it being so evident, that a Christian  
must be much forsaken of his Reason,  
before he can entertain a Doubt about  
it. But when I consider, that it ought to  
be lay'd as one of the main Foundations of  
the Christian Religion, and the strongest  
Inducement to an Holy Life; that most  
entertain but a slight Assent to it, an  
unactive and sluggish Opinion, rather  
than a sprightly and efficacious Faith; it  
being the unhappy Privilege of a Chri-  
stian to be born in a Capacity of sucking  
in the most Glorious Truths, without  
any industrious Search after them, or  
savouring Digesting of them: Considering  
too what Pains St. *Paul* bestows upon  
the same Subject, and that a whole Sect  
of the *Jews*, the *Sadducees*, believ'd no  
Resurrection; I cannot but hope my  
Labour well spent.

*Matt.* xxii. 32. by a Proof taken out  
of *Exodus* iii. 6. our Saviour confounds  
the dogmatical and fullen *Sadducees*, and  
shews, That their Error sprang from  
their

1 Cor. xv.

**VOL. I.** their Ignorance of the Scriptures, and their too mean Apprehension of the Omnipotence of God; *Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, and the Power of God*; the former plainly averring, and a clear Understanding of the latter rendering it a most rational Assertion. And then having laid down the Reasons of their Blindness, he proceeds to prove what he had said, by a Quotation of a Part of Scripture themselves allow'd of; for the *Sadducees* rejected both the *Psalms* and *Prophets*, receiving no Scripture for Canonical but *the Pentateuch*. *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*. Now God is not *the God of the Dead, but the Living*; which was so smartly concluded, that the common People were *astonish'd at his Doctrine*.

The Strength of the Argument lies in this; God defends and rewards those whose God he is; and therefore it could not be suppos'd, that God is unable to rescue them from the Power of Death; or that he had so little Love or Care for those his Favourites, that he would permit Death to triumph over them for ever; that he should leave them in Everlasting Silence, in a Place where all Things are forgotten; for what Pre-

rogative

rogative had those Darlings of G O D, if Ser. XI. they perish'd like the Beasts, and inherit Everlasting Corruption? With such Thoughts as these, *Antoninus* the Emperor and Stoick buoy'd up his pensive Soul, distrustful of Eternity; *Metinks*, saith he, *those who have liv'd Friends to the Gods, shall receive this Reward of them, to live with them in the other World for ever; for to be forgotten, would imply in the Gods a weakness either of Love or Power.* What the Philosopher apply'd to many, would be good Divinity apply'd to one G O D. *Job's Con-* Job xix. fidence springs from the same Fountain, 23. the inexhaustible Love of his Redeemer; for to what Purpose *did God bow the Heavens and come down*, unless it were, that he might translate us thither? Is Corruption and Worms the Purchase of his Cross and Wounds? Or does that Love which transported him to Death, die of it self, and, like some greedy Flame, rave whilst it meets Opposition, and then faint and die after its Conquest? No, whatever is in G O D is G O D, and therefore *God is Love*, 1 John iv. 8. so that he can as soon cease his Being as his Love; and if so, the same Love which did subject our Redeemer to the Grave, shall rescue us from it.

Q

Most



Vol. I. Most of the Arguments of Scripture  
 are grounded upon this very Topick,  
 the Love of G O D to Mankind; unless  
 we shall add that of St. Paul, *If the  
 Dead rise not, then is your Faith vain,*  
 and, which is a direct Consequence,  
*we of all Men are most miserable,* having  
 no Prospect of Happiness beyond the  
 Grave, *and our Hope only in this Life:*  
 Which will seem most absurd to any,  
 that the Christian should die daily, and  
 yet expect no Reward but Everlasting  
 Death at last; that having but a fading  
 and short Life, we should imbitter it  
 with Self-denial, Watchings, Pains and  
 Dangers; that the Apostles should chal-  
 lenge Dangers, and out-dare Persecuti-  
 ons; that they should delight in and  
 boast of nothing more than Imprisonment,  
 Stripes, Reproaches, nay, Death itself,  
 if nothing else were to Crown and Re-  
 ward them, but those Pleasures or Glo-  
 ries which attend this Life, when they  
 hated nothing more, scorn'd nothing  
 more: No, nothing could make them  
 prodigal of Life, but the Prospect of a  
 more Glorious one; nothing could make  
 them affront Afflictions, and out-brave  
 the Malice and the Fury of Man, but  
 the Support of a Deity, and the clear  
*Evidence of Things not seen.* It was  
 their

their Faith, which made that Death, Ser. XI. which was a King of Terrors to the World, their Wish and *earnest Expectation*; they had seen him baffled and triumphed over by a Crucified and Rising Saviour. Philosophy could make the Heathens despise Death; only Christianity can make Men in Love with it. They saw the Captain of their Salvation, Christ *Jesus, made Perfect* and Glorious *by his Sufferings*, and now knew, they only fell to conquer, died to live; Death being as it were nothing now, but those Pangs which fore-run the New Birth, the Resurrection, and the Grave the Portal to Heaven.

Thus I have disarm'd Death of its *String*, and dispoil'd the *Grave* of its *Victories*, by proving to you a Future Resurrection. But lest the Profane and Wicked should think this Doctrine of the Resurrection does nothing concern them, as having no share in the Love of God; let me tell them, That Wrath and Justice shall effect their Resurrection, as Love and Mercy will do that of the Righteous: *Marvel not at this; for the Hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth, they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of*

John v:  
28, 29;



*VOL. I. Life; and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation:* The Evil shall be drag'd from their Prison to their Tribunal, the Good carry'd in Triumph on the Wings of Angels from their Dormitory to their Throne. So that it is not only your Concern to know, that *these Bones shall live*, but to know what Destiny remains for us in Eternity. We shall all arise, but to different Ends; the Wicked shall rise to Life, only to die again the *Second Death*; the Just shall rise to die no more, to enjoy an Eternity of Bliss amidst the Glories and Choirs of Heaven, whither, we hope, the Soul took its Flight at its Enlargement from this Body, and there enjoys an Antepast of these Pleasures, which it shall hereafter more fully drench it self in, and now wonders what it was that could render this Life lovely, or ever engage it to a Consent to any Pleasure or Satisfaction so far unworthy of its Being. This, not only my Charity, but Reason prompts me to believe, and confirms my Hope; for a Religious Life and Death doth promise nothing less.

In a Series of Fourscore Years, I cannot find that common Fame brands her Name with the least Stain; and Silence in



in this Age is Panegyrick enough; and Ser. XI. to acknowledge one Innocent, is loudly to proclaim one Virtuous: For as, to be Man, and Subject to no Frailties or Imperfections, is one Impossibility; so for this detracting and censorious World not to pry into and declare 'em, is another, and I think almost as great. This she ow'd to a Pious and a Generous Education in her Youth, wherein she witnessed, that Christianity and a sober Gallantry were not at all incompatible, but that Christian Graces added a Lustre to the Excellencies acquir'd by a Genteel Education. This Conflux of Worthy Friends, to pay their last Debt and Honour to her, yield an ample Testimony of her obliging and worthy Demeanour in her Younger Years. That Harmony of Soul, remarkable in the Lives of her Husband and herself, is a clear Proof that she Will'd what he Acted, and is sufficient to appropriate all his Virtues to her. It is not the least Part of a good Christian to perform the Duties of a good Wife; it argues a Smoothness, an Evenness of Temper, and a Mind that glories in Humility and Obedience.

**VOL. I** Since I have known her, she hath liv'd from the World, rather than a Part of it; Dead long ago, if to part with the World be Death: What little Concerns she was entangled in, were rather her Misfortunes, than her Choice; for I have seen her testify a Regret with Tears. I have seen her chearfully and frequently creep along to this Temple of the Lord, and have Reason to believe, that her Devotion sometimes transported her above the Strength of her Crazy Age.

As to that Charity, which, together with the Love of God, are the Essential Parts which compleat Christianity; I have seen her a zealous Supplicant to my Lord of *Llandaff* in the behalf of the Poor, that by his Assistance, the Pious Designs of her Husband (known to some of you) might not be defeated: And in a word, that Little she hath left behind her, does easily prevail with me to believe, That she resolv'd to have nothing here in the World, that might make her unwilling to part with it; and that she thought of nothing more than of what we now celebrate, her *Funeral*.

*The End of the Eleventh Sermon.*

S E R.



# SERMON XII.

The Great Affizes of the LAST  
DAY.

[Being an Affize-Sermon.]

1 PET. iv. 7.

*But the end of all things is at hand: be  
ye therefore sober, and watch unto  
Prayer.*



SOME, on such Occasions VOL. I.  
as these, have insisted on  
the Duty of the Bench  
and the Bar, Witnesses and  
Jury, and that of particu-  
lar Men in the Prosecution of their Suits.  
Others have recommended the Interest  
of Church and State; and surely not im-  
properly, in Auditories, where so many  
enjoy those eminent Abilities and Stations,  
which render them very capable of ser-  
ving both. Some, again, have endeavour'd



**VOL. I.** to possess their Auditors with a Zeal for Reformation, which has been set on foot and carry'd on of late by many; with so much Industry, and, I hope, Sincerity; and since this is a Design on which the Virtue, and consequently the Prosperity of this and the following Ages does depend, how reasonable is it for the Preachers of the Gospel of Christ, to endeavour to engage all such in it, whose Example, Parts, and Learning, can contribute not a little to it? However, I have at this time propos'd to my self a Method somewhat different from these, but such a one as comprises 'em all: For I conceive, if I can possess the Minds of my Hearers with a due Sense of the Obligation they lie under to do their Duty, every Man in his Station; if I can convince them, how much it concerns 'em to acquit themselves with a good Conscience towards God and Man; I shall not need to recommend this or that Duty in particular, much less shall I need to direct 'em what Ways they are to take in it; which, in many Cases, it would be hard for me to do, without Vanity and Presumption. I have therefore chosen for the Subject of our Meditation at this time, the Great Assizes of the Last Day; well knowing, that if any thing can awaken

awaken the Conscience, if any thing Serm.  
can give Life and Authority to its Com- XII.  
mands or Reproofs; if any thing can  
beget in the Mind of Man a lively Sense  
of Duty, a Zeal for the Glory of God, and  
the Publick Good; if any thing, finally,  
can prevail upon us to do to others as  
we would be done by, it must be this:  
For if either Men do not believe, or are  
not concerned for their Eternal Interest,  
'tis, I doubt, to little Purpose to call  
them to the Consideration of their Tem-  
poral; which no Man must pretend to  
understand better than they do them-  
selves, or at least, than they fancy they  
do. I beseech you therefore to reflect,  
with me, a little while seriously on these  
Words of my Text, *The End of all  
things is at hand: be ye therefore sober,  
and watch unto Prayer.*

That by *the End of all things*, is here  
to be understood *the Day of Judgment*,  
is plain from *v. 5. Who shall give account  
to him that is ready to judge both the  
Quick and the Dead.* And this is all  
that is necessary to be said for the Expi-  
cation of the Words; from which I shall  
treat of these several Things:

I. That

Vol. I.



I. That there is a Judgment to come.

II. That *this is the End of all things.*III. That it is *at hand.*

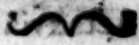
IV. That the General Inference we are to make from this great Article of our Faith, *a Judgment to come,* is that in my Text, *Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer.*

But of this last I shall say but very little; because I think it best to subjoyn some practical Reflexions to each of the foregoing Heads.

I. That there is a Judgment to come. I need not tell you, that the Gospel, in a thousand Places, asserts a Judgment to come. *We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that to Judgment.* Our Saviour, Matt. xxv. gives us a Description of this Day, and concludes in these Words, *And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.* Nor is the Spirit

content



content only to assert such a Day as this, *Serm.*  
but it also proves and establishes it by *XII.*  
two Arguments, not to mention others. 

The first is taken from the Righteous-  
ness of God: Thus St. Paul; *But we are* *Rom. ii. 2.*  
*sure that the Judgment of God is accord-*  
*ing to Truth, against them which commit*  
*such things.* Hence God is said to Judge *Acts xvii.*  
*the World in Righteousness;* and the *31.*  
Apostle tells us, *That it is a righteous* *1 Thess. i.*  
*thing with God to recompense Tribula-* *6, 7.*  
*tion to them who trouble you; and to you*  
*who are troubled, rest with us, when the*  
*Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven*  
*with his mighty Angels, and so on.*  
Hence, finally, this Day of Judgment is  
called the *Day of the Revelation of the* *Rom. ii. 5.*  
*Righteous Judgment of God.* And this  
one Consideration, by the way, is, if it  
were rightly understood, a full Answer  
to all those vain Objections against the  
Greatness and Eternity of Hell-Tor-  
ments. We are sure that the Punish-  
ment will be proportion'd to the Offence;  
and if it be so, no Man can think other-  
wise but that it must be a terrible one,  
unless he have very false Notions of  
Sin, and very contemptible ones of the  
Majesty of God, the Sufferings of  
Christ, and the Motions and Solicita-  
tions of the Holy Spirit.

The

Vol. I. The next Argument on which the  
 Day of Judgment is built, in Scripture,  
 Acts xvii. is, the Resurrection of Jesus: *And the*  
 30, 31. *Times of this Ignorance God winked at;*  
*but now commandeth all Men every where*  
*to repent: because he hath appointed a*  
*Day, in the which he will judge the World*  
*in Righteousness, by that Man whom he*  
*hath ordained; whereof he hath given*  
*Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath*  
*raised him from the Dead.* The Force of  
 this Argument lies in this: The Domi-  
 nion of Christ, and the Salvation of  
 Man, cannot be compleat without a Final  
 Judgment; for what can Salvation sig-  
 nify, or what can Christ's being a Prince  
 and Saviour import, if there be neither  
 Reward for the Righteous, nor Punish-  
 ment for the Wicked? The Doctrine  
 then of a Judgment to come, must remain  
 unshaken, or the Gospel must be no Di-  
 vine Revelation. But this will ever be  
 a Divine Revelation, in despite of all the  
 despicable Attempts of desperate Sinners  
 indeed, but miserable Wits, till they can  
 shew us (which they never can) that  
 the great Design of the Gospel, or the  
 Ways and Means by which it is carried  
 on, is unworthy of God; that Im-  
 postors can make Holiness their great,  
 their sole End, and be content to propa-  
 gate

gate it by an active Self-denying Life, *Serm.*  
a painful and shameful Death; that the *XII.*  
Devil can and will work Miracles to de-  
stroy his own Kingdom, and advance  
God's; that Man or Devil could fulfil  
in Christ Jesus, the numerous and va-  
rious Predictions of the Prophets in all  
Ages: Finally, either that there is no  
GOD; or if there be, that there neither  
is, nor ought to be, any Publick settled  
Worship of him in the World; or else  
that some other Religion offers us fairer  
Proofs of a Divine Authority. This I  
am sure can never be, and by conse-  
quence, the great Article of a Judgment  
to come can never be overthrown.

But suppose we could not vouch Re-  
velation for this Truth, what think you  
would the Light of Nature dictate to us?  
Must not a holy GOD hate Sin? and if  
he hate it, must he not punish it? Or  
would you have the Hatred of GOD  
be as harmless and insignificant a thing,  
as some infatuated, besotted Wretches  
think their Sin? Has GOD made a  
World, and will he not govern it? Or,  
can he govern the Intellectual, Moral  
World, without judging it? Has he im-  
planted in Man a Power to distinguish  
between Good and Evil, and to reflect  
upon his Actions, and will he never call

us



**VOL. I.** us to an account for them? Has he enacted a Law for the World, as he certainly has, for even the Pagan never was without one; and can it consist with his Holiness or Majesty, to be utterly unconcern'd whether it be obey'd or violated? To conclude: The Confusion there is in human Affairs, the unaccountable Distribution of Good and Evil, do even force us to expect a Judgment to come, *another World, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.* For since, in a thousand Cases, Good befalls Ill Men, and Evil Good; since Temporal Good can be no sufficient Encouragement to Virtue, nor Temporal Evil a sufficient Determent from Vice; it is plain there must be a Day of Retribution, or else there could be no sufficient Motive to the one, nor Determent from the other. To all this we may add, that it will be impossible to clear either the Wisdom or Goodness of God, without a Judgment to come. It will be impossible to discover to what End he has made such a World, or such a Creature as Man, or to what Purpose he governs in that Manner he does; for the World is made fit for a State of Trial and Probation, not of Rest and Enjoyment: Man is created neither perfect nor happy, capable of learning and improving,

2 Pet. iii.

13.

proving, and liable to be deprav'd and Serm.  
corrupted; and the Administrations of XII.  
Providence are dark, mysterious and  
doubtful. All which does plainly suggest  
to us, that this present State is only pre-  
vious and preparatory to another. I  
have said thus much for Proof of a  
Judgment to come, because the Growth  
of Infidelity, the present Occasion, which  
requires it should be deeply imprinted  
in your Minds, and my Text, led me to  
it. I will now make a practical Reflexion  
upon it.

I know you profess and openly ac-  
knowledge this Truth, I hope you be-  
lieve it; but give me leave to demand,  
Have you consider'd it as you should?  
Has it had that Influence upon you  
which it should? Our Saviour is *coming*  
*to judge the Quick and the Dead*;  
*to render to every one of us according*  
*to our Works*; What Interest have you  
in him? And upon what Ground does  
it stand? Have you examin'd your Ways,  
and prepar'd your selves to meet him?  
Have you repented of whatever you  
have done amiss, and made Restitution  
for the Injustice and Wrong that you  
have been guilty of? And do you now  
walk as becomes the Disciples of Christ?  
Have you devoted your selves to the  
great

*Vol. I. great Duties of our Holy Religion, the Works of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope?* Do you often commune with your own Hearts, and reflect impartially upon your own Ways? And particularly, do you examine how you discharge the Duties of your Station, with what Truth and Faithfulness, with what Justice and Integrity? In one word, Is the Gospel your Rule, Christ your Lord, Religion your Business, and Heaven your Hope? And after all, do you look upon yourselves as *unprofitable Servants*, and expect all from the Grace and Mercy of *God in Christ Jesus*? If this be your State, or at least the State you are pressing after with Sincerity, then the Day of Judgment will be to you a Day of Joy and Triumph, a Day of Pleasure and Glory: But if all be otherwise, it will be a terrible Day; a Day of Indignation and Wrath, of Tribulation and Anguish; a Day that will bring to Light all the hidden Works, either of Lewdness or Fraud; a Day that will baffle all the Confidence of Sinners, and strip Sin of all its Disguises; a Day that will level the Mighty and the Mean, and, without Respect of Persons, pass Sentence upon All, according to their Works:



Works: And then every Man will be  
fully, but sadly convinced, how despi-  
cable a Thing that Profit is, which he  
now reaps from Corruption and Injustice;  
and how detestable that Pleasure, which  
springs from Licentiousness and De-  
bauchery. I pass on to the

Serm.  
XII.

II<sup>d</sup> Thing, that is, To consider the  
Day of Judgment, under the Notion in  
my Text, as it is, *The End of all Things*.  
It were superfluous to prove, that this  
Day will put an End to Wealth and  
Power, to Pride and State, and, in one  
word, to all the Pleasures and Enjoy-  
ments of the Sinner. This the very  
Nature of the Thing imports; and  
therefore I will hasten to the Use we are  
to make of this Consideration.

What this ought to be, St. Peter hath 2 Pet. iii.  
plainly taught us, *The Day of the Lord* 10, -- 14  
*will come as a Thief in the Night, in the  
which the Heavens will pass away with a  
great Noise, and the Elements shall melt  
with fervent Heat, the Earth also and  
the Works that are therein shall be burnt  
up. Seeing then that all these things shall  
be dissolved, what manner of Persons ought  
ye to be in all holy Conversation and God-  
liness, looking for and hasting unto the  
Coming of the Day of God, wherein the*  
R Heavens

**VOL. I.** *Heavens being on Fire, shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat? Nevertheless we, according to his Promise, look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness. Wherefore, Beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without spot, and blameless.* The Force of this Argument lies thus: Since this World will have an End, and there is another that will not; Since this will have such a terrible End, and the Eternity of the other will be one uninterrupted State of perfect Righteousness, and perfect Happiness; Why do we doat upon the one, and neglect the other? Why do we lay up our Treasures upon Earth, and make no Provision for Eternity? Why do we contend and quarrel, contrive and project, solicit, court and canvas, as if we were to be Immortal here, and express so little Concern for that World where we must abide for ever? Why do we sweat and toil, run so many Hazards, and digest so many Neglects, that we may grow up to something, I know not what, here; and yet will take no Pains, undergo no Hardships, to become Kings and Princes, to obtain an Equality with Angels in the other World, while at the same time we pretend



pretend to believe, that *the things which are seen are Temporal, but that the things which are not seen are Eternal?* It is the very same Argument which St. John makes use of to extinguish in us the Love of the World, and inkindle in us the Love of the Father; *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World, &c.* And why? *Because the World passeth away, and the Lust thereof; but he that doeth the Will of God, abideth for ever.*

Serm. XII.

2 Cor. iv. 18.

1 John ii.

I know not what Strength you think there is in this Reasoning now, but let the hardiest of Sinners suppose the Day of Judgment come, and fancy himself surrounded with the thousand Terrors of that Day, Nature dissolving in Agonies, the World flaming, the Trumpet of the Arch-Angel sounding, the Glory of God displaying it self in the Person of Christ and Armies of Angels, the Roaring of the Sea, the Convulsion of the Earth, the Falling of Rocks and Mountains, dreadful Flashes of Lightning, and Volleys of Thunder, the Shrieks and Howlings of Devils, and distressed Sinners, attacking him from every Quarter, and a guilty Conscience stabbing and terrifying him from within; let, I say, the hardiest of Sinners make this Supposition, and tell me what



Vol. I. he believes his Thoughts would be. Ah, stupid Wretch! Will such a one then say, I am lost and undone for ever? Was I not often enough told of this Day? Had I not Proofs enow made me, that it would certainly come, and yet I would not think on it, would not prepare for it? Ah! Now I see those Miseries that I cannot escape; I see those Glories that I can never share in, and wo is me for ever! Both the one and the other is greater than ever I was told. Ah, how wretchedly have I mispent the Day of Grace! How foolishly, how madly have I acted, in giving my self to the Profits and Pleasures of the World! Where are now my Lands and Possessions? Where are my Friends and Flatterers? What now remains of all my Pride and Confidence, of all my impotent Lusts and sinful Pleasures? Oh, the bitter End of my incorrigible Folly! What would I now not give for one of the Days of the Son of Man? What would I not now part with, if there were any thing for me to part with, for an Interest in Christ? But it cannot be. O Sin! O Madness! O Hell! O Eternity! What dismal Reflexions are these? Ah! may God never suffer one of us to come to this pass. This were enough, methinks, to move any Man to look

look well to his Heart, and to his Serm.  
 Actions, and to observe the great Rules XII.  
 of Truth, Justice and Charity: And  
 yet what follows, gives an additional  
 Force and Virtue to this Argument. For,

III. This Day of Judgment is near,  
*The End of all things is at hand.* Several  
 Learned Men have been of Opin-  
 ion, that the Apostle did believe the  
 Day of Judgment so near, as that it  
 should come in that Generation; and  
 that they mistook our Saviour's Dis-  
 course, wherein he joyn'd together the  
 Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the End of  
 the World; as they did mistake his  
 Meaning, as to the Extent of their  
 Commission to Preach the Gospel, and  
 that they were afterwards vouchsaf'd a  
 New Revelation, to set them right in this,  
 as well as in the other. But I cannot  
 be of their Mind; partly, because I can-  
 not imagine the Apostles were so little  
 vers'd in the Writings of *Ezekiel, Daniel,*  
 and the rest of the Prophets, especially  
 after our Saviour had expounded the  
 Scriptures to them, and taught them  
*the things pertaining to the Kingdom of* Acts i. 3.  
*God,* after his Resurrection. Next, be-  
 cause I plainly find, that St. Paul did 2 Thess. ii  
 expect an universal Apostacy, and the

Vol. I. Revelation of Antichrist before that Day;  
 and St. Peter tells us, *that a thousand*  
 a Per. iii. *Years are with God but as one Day.* But  
 8.

then you will say, How came the Apostles, when they mention this Day, to use such Language as was apt to beget in the Minds of their Readers an immediate Expectation of it? To this may be answer'd these two or three things.

1. The Time of this Judgment was uncertain and unknown; and since it was so, it was but fit that the wiser Course should be taken, and that Men should rather be alarm'd into sudden and immediate Expectations, than tempted to delay and put off this Day: And this is all I can find the Apostles to have done; and indeed they could do no more; they could only speak in general Terms of the Nearness of this Day, they could not fix nor limit it to any particular Time; and if they were mov'd by the Spirit to speak of this Day in such a manner as might induce others to make such particular Applications as might be beneficial to all in every Age, I can't see that this is inconsistent with the Truth, Wisdom and Goodness of the Holy Spirit.

The



2. The Time between Christ's First Serm.  
and Second Coming, is but short, if we XII.  
reckon as God does, and as the Scrip-  
ture teaches us to do, *That one Day is*  
*with the Lord as a thousand Years, and a*  
*thousand Years as one Day.*

3. How far off soever the Day of  
Judgment were in any Age, yet Man's  
Time of Preparation for it, ever was,  
and now is, very short. When Death  
comes, then comes the Day of Judg-  
ment to every Man, in a proper Sense  
enough; for such as the one finds him,  
such will the other; if he be unprepar'd  
for the one, he will not be better prepar'd  
for the other: Therefore as Man ought  
in Prudence to be upon his Watch, and  
his Guard, since he knows not what  
Hour Death will come; so, since Death  
and Judgment are the same Things to  
him, in reference to his Eternity, the  
Apostles might wisely and properly speak  
of the Day of Judgment, in such a Lan-  
guage as might move every Man daily  
to expect it.

After all, this Matter is not of any  
very near Concern to us; for at what  
distance soever the Day of Judgment  
was in the Days of the Primitive Chri-  
stians, we have great Reason to think,

R 4.

that

Vol. I. that it is near now. I am sure we can think nothing more wisely, nor more safely; and if so, it is plain what we are to infer, namely, what our Master teaches us to do, *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.* Who then is a faithful and wise Servant whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due Season? Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him Ruler over all his Goods. But and if that evil Servant shall say in his Heart, *My Lord delayeth his coming,* and shall begin to smite his Fellow-Servants, and to eat and drink with the Drunken: the Lord of that Servant shall come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and in an Hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. What our Lord says here, with a particular regard to Rulers and Pastors, may, in proportion, be apply'd to all others. All have Talents to give an Account of; all are alike uncertain at what Hour the Lord will come; and the Issue of his

his Coming, imports no less to all, than *Serm.*  
unalterable and Eternal Happiness or *XII.*  
Misery, and can import no more to any: ~

Therefore our Lord elsewhere closes  
the same Argument with this General  
Exhortation, *And what I say unto you,* *Mar. xiii.*

*I say unto all; Watch.* I beseech you *37.*  
to reflect a little on this Motive. Is it

not Truth? Is there not Sense and  
Weight in it? Is there not an Eternity  
to be prepar'd for? Is not the Time  
allotted for this Preparation but very  
short, taken in the utmost Extent pos-  
sible? And is not this Time often cut  
shorter by a divine Sentence, and very  
often by Mens own Vices; so that Man  
is very uncertain what Time he has  
to prepare for a future Judgment? And  
yet without this Provision, all his Wis-  
dom in other Matters is mere Folly, all  
his Temporal Happiness a Dream, and  
Life it self, as he manages it, is but the  
Occasion of unspeakable Misery; so  
that he will have reason to wish a thou-  
sand times, that he had never been born,  
that the Gospel had never been preach'd  
to him, that Christ had never died for  
him, and that Grace and Mercy had  
never been tender'd him.

This is our Case certainly: And yet,  
insensible Wretches that we are! who  
would



**VOL.** I would not be apt to infer the quite contrary from our Lives? namely, That there were no Life after this, or that there were no Preparation necessary for it; or if there were, that we had Time enough for it, and to spare; and, finally, that we were certain of this Time, and could never be deprived of a Moment of it unexpectedly, nor be surpriz'd by the Coming of our Lord.

I have dispatch'd the Three first Things contain'd in my Text; and by subjoyning a few practical Reflexions upon each, I have, as I design'd, render'd it the less necessary to insist upon the,

IV. Fourth Thing, namely, The Inference which St. Peter here teaches us to make from the Doctrine in the Text, *The end of all things is at hand*; namely, *That we should be therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer.* It were otherwise easie for me to shew you, what Influence Sobriety and Prayer have upon our Virtue in this Life, and our Deliverance and Glory in another. It were easy to shew you, that the one puts us in a Condition to make the best Use of our Natural Strength and Light; and the other derives an Increase of, or Addition to both,

from

from Heaven: that the one and the other enable us to consider our Ways, and do the Duties of our Station; that they dispose and prepare us for a Judgment to come, and prevent our being surpriz'd by that Day, before our Accounts be stated, our Sins blotted out, and our Pardon seal'd. But all this you cannot chuse but be sensible of, unless you disbelieve the Gospel; for you cannot but know how prevalent Prayer is with God; and you cannot but know what need you stand in of it, if you know your selves. You cannot but know how necessary it is to be wakeful and sollicitous, when you consider not only how frail, but how corrupt we are; how many and sometimes strong Temptations we are attack'd by, and that nothing less depends upon our Success, than the escaping the Wrath to come, and the obtaining Immortality and Glory; and consequently you cannot but know how unfit that Mind is either to do its Duty in such a State as this, or to meet God in the Great Day of Judgment, which is intoxicated and infatuated by Intemperance, Ambition, Pleasure, or any other Vice; a Frame of Mind directly opposite to what

**VOL. I.** what the Scripture exhorts us to. I will therefore conclude all, with a very short Application.

The Peace, the Comfort, the Fortunes of many, nay, the Lives of some, depend upon your Conduct at this Time. Acquit your selves therefore as becomes those who believe a Judgment to come, who expect that all that they do here, shall at that Day be expos'd to the open Light: And then Truth, and Justice, and unbiass'd Integrity, shall meet with Praise and Reward from G O D; but Fraud and Falshood, Corruption and Subtilty, Partiality and Oppression, and every sort of Injustice, shall sink under the Weight of Everlasting Reproach, and Everlasting Punishment; and if Power, or Eloquence, or any other Gift of G O D, shall be then found to have been abus'd or prostituted to serve any such vile Ends, this will be an intolerable Aggravation of the Sin, and will render such Men as much more Miserable in another Life, as they were Eminent in this. Guard your Hearts therefore against every inordinate Appetite, against every Temptation, and especially against the Love of the World and a Forgetfulness of G O D, and often think



think seriously that a Holy and All-seeing God will one Day bring every thing into Judgment. And *let no Man deceive himself with vain Words*; let no Man say, that God is not bound to fulfil his Threats: God can never threaten what it is unjust or unbecoming him to execute. This would look more like the Rage and Revenge of an impotent Creature, than the Goodness and Wisdom of a Gracious Sovereign and Unerring Judge. Let no Man say, that God can't be provok'd to such a Degree by the Sins of a frail Man; nothing can be more repugnant to Light than Darkness, to Holiness than Sin; and what the Sinner calls Frailty, is in truth Wilfulness and Presumption. *Let no Man therefore deceive himself with vain Words*, for Sin will certainly bring down the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience; but I hope better things of you, and things that accompany your Salvation. I hope you are *Children of the Light* and of the Day, and will acquit your selves as such: I have no reason to doubt but you have always believed a Judgment to come; and I hope you are the more confirmed in it, from what I have said:

Serm.

XH.

Eph. v. 6.

**Vol. I. said:** And therefore I cannot but expect that you will act consonant to your Holy Faith, that you will act like Men of Sense; and that you cannot do, unless you act like Men of Conscience too.

*Now to God the Father, &c.*

*The End of the Twelfth Sermon.*



S E R:

F Alle



# SERMON XIII.

The State of Separate Souls between Death and Judgment.

[The First Sermon on this Text.]

LUKE xvi. 22, 23.

*And it came to pass that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom: the Rich Man also died, and was buried. And in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom.*



W HETHER this be a Vol. I.  
History or Parable, or  
partly both, (which is not  
well agreed) imports but  
little.

For, *First*: There is nothing here of  
Allegory, or Metaphor, or Resemblance  
and



**VOL. I.** and Allusion, which are the main Causes of Obscurity in Parables: Every thing here is as plain as any Historical Narration of a Matter of Fact.

*Secondly:* Though the Accidental and Circumstantial Parts of a Parable are not always to be depended upon for Doctrines of Faith, or Instruction of Manners; yet surely we may safely deduce both from that which appears to be the manifest Scope and Design of a Parable, or else one great part of our Saviour's Discourses would be very uselefs and unserviceable, as being Parabolical.

*Thirdly:* We may as safely argue from Parables as History, when we do not endeavour to establish any new Doctrine, but such as are agreeable to the Analogy of Faith, and consonant to all parts of Scripture.

Let therefore the Papists, who have made *Lazarus* a Saint, and subscrib'd under his Image, *Sancte Lazare, Ora pro nobis*; Let 'em see to it, that this be real History: As to my Purpose, it is indifferent whether it be History or Parable, for the Reasons I have given; I can with equal Safety deduce Points of Doctrine for our Instruction. And that I may do so, I will,

I. Shew

Serm.

XIII.

I. Shew you what seems to me the Design of this Parable.

II. I will consider the State of Separate Souls, which is here represented to us.

III. I will shew you the Use of this Consideration, towards the Government of our Lives.

I. Of the Design of this Parable. Our Saviour, through this whole Chapter, recommends Charity, and condemns Covetousness; which Discourse was entertained by the *Pharisees*, whose darling Vice this was, just as Sermons which reprove and condemn a particular Sin, by Men who are the most notoriously guilty of it. *Ἐξέμουν αὐτόν, they derided him, they assaulted* -- Ver. 14: his Doctrine with Cavils, and his Person with Contempt: However, he pursued his Design, and in a Parable or History which, because it affects the Imagination as well as convinces the Reason, is the most powerful sort of Argument, represents to 'em their State, both in respect of their Vice, and their Obstinacy in it; that, in respect of their Obstinacy, their Condition was deplorable, their Disease incurable; which

S he

VOL. I. he shews in that Discourse between *Abraham* and the Rich Man, which ended in that of *Abraham*; If they hear not *Moses* and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, tho' one rose from the Dead. And in respect of their Vice, he endeavours to possess them with melancholy Apprehensions of the fatal Issue of it, by letting 'em see in the Rich Man what would be the Consequence of it in another World.

Ver. 9. When our Saviour discours'd to 'em of Liberality towards the Poor, *Make to your selves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, intimating, that Temporal Possessions were a short and perishing Good, which Man could enjoy but for a little Moment, but that the Reward of Charity and Alms were Eternal; the *Pharisees* were disgusted at his attacking a Vice which they had so particularly espous'd. First they oppos'd his Doctrine, as inconsistent with the Law, which makes its Profelytes so many Promises of Earthly Wealth and Grandeur. But our Saviour knew well the Design of the Law, that never meant that Men should be enrich'd by Covetousness and Uncharitableness, or have Wealth only to spend it upon their own private Luxury or Vanity; but, on the quite



quite contrary, promis'd Wealth, especially in order to, and as a Reward of the Exercise of Charity; and had expressly commanded, that they should seek out the Poor to relieve them; and that they should spare not only from the Superfluity of their Luxury, but also from their Necessaries, for the Relief of them. He therefore saw plainly, that their Lust had blinded 'em, and their Misinterpretation of the Law proceeded only from an obstinate Love of the Sin it condemned, and therefore did not think fit to endeavour their Conviction, by answering their Objections; for this, in such Men, begets only a greater Zeal of Contention; but only by the most lively Representation that could be, discovered to them what would be their State hereafter. *There was a certain rich Man, &c.*

Serm  
XIII.

I come, *2dly*, To consider the State of Souls after their Separation from the Body. A true Notion of which, may be comprehended in these Two Propositions.

*1st*: That the Souls of Men are not dissolv'd with the Bodies; but survive them, and exist after them.

S 2

*2dly*:

VOL. I. 2<sup>dy</sup>: That the Souls of Good Men depart immediately into Joy and Happiness: The Souls of Bad Men into Pains and Misery.

As to the 1<sup>st</sup>. The Heathens had generally receiv'd this Opinion, partly upon the account of Tradition, partly of Reason: We have now that ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉, that *Divine Revelation*, which *Socrates* and *Plato* with'd in this Point; and therefore I shall take no notice of their Traditions. Their Reasons for the Immortality of the Soul did amount to a strong Probability; and therefore I will not wholly omit the Consideration of them, because it may contribute something to the Confirmation of our Faith in this Article; nor yet dwell too long upon them, as if we had not a surer Foundation of our Faith than this.

Those Arguments which they were wont to make use of from the Justice of God, and his Love of Virtue and Goodness, do indeed conclude a Future Life, but do not necessarily evince the Immortality of the Soul; since if the Reward of Virtue and the Punishment of Vice be Eternal, they may commence when the Almighty pleases, without any Repugnancy to this his Love and Justice; it being not more necessary, for the Proof

or



or Manifestation of either, that G O D Serm.  
should immediately after Death confer XIII.  
his Rewards, or execute his Punish-  
ments, than it is, that in this Life he  
should reward a good Deed, or punish  
a bad one as soon as acted. Let Eter-  
nity begin when it will, there will be  
Time enough to punish the blackest  
Guilt, or to reward the fairest Vir-  
tue. So then the Belief of the Death  
of the Soul together with the Body,  
or the Belief of its Insensibleness or  
Sleep, through the whole Interval of  
Time that reacheth from Death to the  
Judgment to come, is consistent enough  
with a Future State of Reward or Pu-  
nishment to begin one time or other,  
and never to have an end; and by con-  
sequence consistent enough with the  
Justice and Love of GOD. I will therefore  
consider those Arguments of the Hea-  
thens, that may be allowed to pass for  
tolerable good Proofs of the Immortali-  
ty or Existence of the Soul in a State of  
Separation from the Body.

The most material then of their Ar-  
guments were such as were deriv'd from  
the Nature of the Soul: They concluded,  
from those Operations of the Mind which  
can't be perform'd by gross Matter or  
Body, such as Thinking, Reasoning,



**VOL. I.** Contemplation of Truths; which are  
 by no means liable to Sense, that it  
 was a nobler Being than the Body, a  
 Spirit, and incapable of Dissolution.  
 Thus *Marcus Antonius* speaks very agreeable to the *Stoick* Philosophy;  
 The Body, that is Earth and corruptible,  
 and no wonder if that be dissolv'd by  
 Death into its corruptible Principles;  
 but the Soul, that is an Intellectual Mind  
 or Spirit, and therefore 'tis reasonable  
 to believe that it is not liable to the  
 Fate of the Body. Besides, they did  
 very often observe, that the Soul of  
 Man did not, in its most proper Work,  
 depend upon the Body; that it was  
 often most Vigorous when this was Sunk  
 and Decay'd; and therefore they could  
 not think it reasonable, that the Soul  
 should depend upon it for its Existence,  
 which did not depend upon it for its  
 Operation. These and such-like were  
 the Arguments of Heathens, endeavour-  
 ing to establish the Immortality of the  
 Soul upon the Stock of its own Perfe-  
 ctions, and the Excellence of its Spiritu-  
 al Nature. But all this could amount  
 to nothing farther than a fair Proba-  
 bility, and accordingly did very rarely  
 produce any firm and unshaken Assent,

as appears in the Emperor *Antoninus*, Serm. and others, who, after all, could not determine themselves in this Point. XIII.

I will therefore pass on to Revelation; by which I doubt not but that I shall most evidently prove the Existence of the Soul, after the Death of the Body. This very Place, whereof my Text is a part, represents the States of the *Rich Man* and *Lazarus* before the Resurrection; for after, there could remain no Brother of the *Rich Man* in a Capacity of any Benefit, by the Advice or Revelation of any from the Dead. Nay, our Saviour expresses the thing in that manner, that he seems to say, while the Body was carried to the Grave, the Soul of *Lazarus* was carried by Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*, and the Soul of the other into the *Lake of Fire*.

Our Saviour, *Matt. x. 28. Luk. xii. 4.* arms his Disciples against the Fear of Man, by shewing 'em how contemptible that Displeasure was, which could not reach to the Soul. *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell. They are not able to kill the Soul.* If the Dissolution of the Body did unavoidably draw on the Death of the Soul, I can-

**Var. I.** not discern why the Death of the Soul should not be as much in the Power of Man, as that of the Body: for, *Quicquid est causa causa, est causa causati.* Whoever has it in his Power to do that, which being done, must naturally and inevitably produce another remote Effect, has the distant Effect as much in his Power as the nearest.

Our Saviour's Promise to the Thief, **Luk. xxii. 43.** *To Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,* is a clear Indication of the Existence of the Soul after the Body, unless we should say, that this were a peculiar Prerogative of the Thief upon the Cross; for which Fancy, no Man can give any Reason.

**Acts vii. 59.** St. Stephen did firmly believe, that his Soul did survive the Martyrdom of the Body, or else I cannot see any Reason why he should recommend his Spirit into the Hands of his Saviour, any more than his Body.

St. Paul is most express in this Point, **2 Cor. v. 1.** *We know that if our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* That he here spake of the Existence of the Soul in a separate State, is plain, because it begins when the Body is dissolv'd. But not



not to multiply any more Places to this Sermon, Purpose, as having already had occasion XIII. to say something on this Head not long ago, I pass on to shew,

2<sup>dly</sup>: That the Souls of good Men depart immediately into Joy and Happiness; the Souls of bad Men into Pain and Misery. This is plainly imply'd in this Place; for whether *Abraham* here does really signify *Hell*, or whether the *Bosom of Abraham* be Heaven or not, thus much is apparent, That the one Place was a Place of Pain, and the other of Pleasure, from these Words of *Abraham*, *He is comforted, and thou art tormented*. This is as much as is necessary to determine, and less we ought not; more is not needful, as having no more Influence upon our Lives; less is injurious, as diminishing the Happiness of the Blessed, and the Pain of the Wicked, which will tend to take off something of Force from the Motives and Terrors of the Gospel. By the *Bosom of Abraham*, some think in general denoted the Place of Happiness, call'd *Paradise* by our Saviour; but *Grotius*, with greater Reason, thinks it the more Honourable Seat in that Place. The Joys of Heaven are describ'd in Scripture by a Feast, and therefore it is said by our Saviour, they shall come from

Vide  
Ser. II, on  
Phil. i,  
22, 23,

Mat. viii  
11,

*Vol. I. from the East and West, and shall sit down  
 with Abraham, &c.* And in this Feast,  
 the Jews assign'd to Abraham, the Father  
 of their Nation, and of the Faithful, the  
 first Place. To lean therefore upon, or  
 be receiv'd into his Bosom, signifies the  
 greater Degree of Honour, this *Lazarus*  
 was advanced to; he was plac'd next  
 him, for that was the Manner of their  
*Eastern* Eating. Thus *John*, the beloved  
 Disciple, is receiv'd into the Bosom of  
 Jesus. This then being the Sense of  
 this Place, I may very easily confirm it  
 by other Texts of Scripture.

John xii.  
 23.

All those Places which tend to prove  
 the Immortality of the Soul, as that of  
 the Thief's being with Christ in Paradise  
 that Day, St. *Stephen's* commending  
 his Spirit into the Hands of Christ,  
 St. *Paul's* fervent Desire of Death, and  
 of being with Christ, do all shew that  
 the Good do enter immediately into a  
 State of Bliss: Nothing else could make  
 Death desirable, nothing else could make  
 it preferable before this Life; since as  
 to the Rewards of the Resurrection, they  
 will be alike conferr'd upon the Good,  
 whether they Die, or whether they re-  
 main Alive till the Coming of the Lord.  
 But were there no Place in Scripture but  
 that one, made use of in the Office  
 for

for Burial of the Dead, it were abundantly enough, *Blessed are the Dead which Die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours.* What can be more plain, than that even in this State of Death, there is a Difference between him who dies in the Lord, and him who dies not? But what Difference can there be, if either the Soul die together with the Body, or exist in a State of Forgetfulness and Sleep, of Insensibleness and Night, the same thing in a manner as Death? Nay, Is not the thing wherein the State of these two differ, plainly expressed to be Rest and Peace? *They rest from their Labours*; they are no more molested by Temptations and Persecutions, *they rest from those Labours.* This can no way be accommodated to the Rest of the Grave, to the Sleep and Insensibleness of Bodies in their Dormitories, for in this they have no Pre-eminence above the Wicked. But how numerous are the Texts of Scripture, which declare the State of good Men Departed to be a State of Rest? The Church Triumphant is thus describ'd, *Mount Zion, the City of the Living God,* Heb. xii, *the Heavenly Jerusalem, consisting of an* 22, 23. *innumerable Company of Angels, of the*  

General

Serm.  
XIII.

Rev. xiv,  
13.

Rev. xii,



**VOL. I.** *General Assembly of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and of the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect.* The Dissolution, or *Παύσις* of the Soul, was a vain Dream therefore of the Socinians and Anabaptists. Can the Souls of them that were Slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held, be thought to Sleep, and be insensible of their past and future State, who are said to Cry with a loud Voice, *How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost thou not Judge and Avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Do not the *White Robes* bestow'd upon them, import plainly the Communication of Glory and Happiness with which they were invested? Nay, it is expressly said of these, *That they are before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.*

Rev. xvi.  
10.

Rev. vii. 15.

I forbear to define the Degree, and fix the Place of this Happiness or Misery, for the Reverence I bear to greater Men, who have suspended their Judgment in it; or rather, spoken so warily, as if they would not have their Judgment depended upon. I proceed therefore to the

III<sup>d</sup> Thing

Serm.

XIII.  


III<sup>d</sup> Thing propounded to be treated of, the Use of the Doctrine laid down in the foregoing Discourse.

1. This is to dissuade us from Vice, by the Consideration of those unspeakable Punishments which will pursue it. You have heard the Covetousness of the *Rich Man*, and you have heard his End, how much the Pain of his Punishment outweighed the Pleasure of his Sin, how much the Duration of his Torment exceeds that of his Enjoyment. He did indeed, in his Life-time, fare deliciously; and was Attir'd gloriously in Purple; but he is dead, and is gone to Hell, and he has now been tormented in those Flames, where he could not get *one Drop of Water to cool his Tongue*, near 2000 Years. Bitter Punishment! Intolerable Torment!

You have seen his Pain, consider his Sin, it was Covetousness, it was Uncharitableness to poor *Lazarus*. What, he who liv'd in so much Pomp and State, who liv'd in so much Plenty and Magnificence? Yes he. I know not whence it is that we have taken up strange Notions of Covetousness; a Man thinks he may be as Retentive as he pleases of his own, if he do not invade another's, and not be guilty



**V**ol. I. guilty of Covetousness; and provided he deny himself none of the Enjoyments of Life, may be extremely Niggardly to others, and withhold from the Poor even that which is necessary. But in the Gospel-Notion of Covetousness, it may well consist with the highest Luxury and Ostentation of Life, Vanity and Riot; for it consists purely in not giving to the Poor: And indeed it frequently happens, that Luxury doth beget Covetousness. Those Birds that have the hungriest Appetites, are the most Ravenous; those who spend most upon Lust, have the least to bestow upon the Nakedness of the Poor, and their Hunger goes a great way to advance their own Gaiety, and furnish their Table; for they rob the Poor of what God has allow'd them, to waste it upon their own Lust and Vanity.

2. The Use of this is, to encourage the Humility and Patience of God's Children, in suffering the Evils of this Life. These two Things were remarkable in *Lazarus*, 1. His Humility, he *desired only to be fed with the Crumbs* which the Dogs were fed with, tho' he were the *Rich Man's* Fellow-Creature, and superior to him in every thing but his Fortune. 2. His Patience, he re-  
vil'd



vil'd not, he murmur'd not, he did not Sermon.  
 quarrel either with God or Man, the XIII.  
 Providence of the one, or Uncharitable-  
 ness of the other. See now what a  
 Change there is. Angels minister to  
 him, who was us'd with less Kindness  
 and more Contempt than the Dogs of  
*the Rich Man*: He who lay before at  
 the Gate of *the Rich Man*, lies now in  
*the Bosom of Abraham*: He that bore at  
 once the Sores of an Ulcer'd Body, and  
 the Want and Reproaches of a broken  
 Fortune, enjoys now the Plenty and the  
 Glory, the Ease and the Pleasure of an  
 Eternal Kingdom.

*The End of the Thirteenth Sermon.*

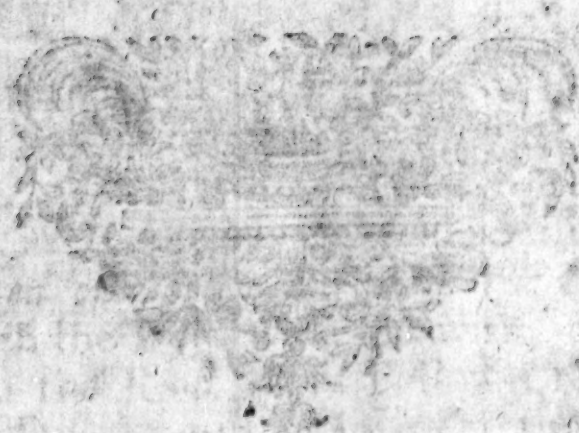
5 JY 61



S E R-

will not be ministered, he did not seem  
to differ with God or Man, the  
XIII. XXV  
providence of the one, or Uncharitable  
of the other. See now what a  
change this is. Angels minister to  
him, who was used with the kindness  
and more contempt than the Dogs of  
the Rich Man. He who lay down at  
the Gate of the Rich Man, is now  
the Prince of the Poor. He that bore  
once the name of an Ugly Body, and  
the name and reputation of a broken  
Fortune, enjoys now the plenty and the  
glory of the table and the pleasure of an  
internal kingdom.

The End of the Twelfth Sermon.





## SERMON XIV.

Shewing, what we are to believe  
concerning a particular Judgment  
immediately after Death.

[The Second Sermon on this Text.]

LUKE xvi. 22, 23.

*And it came to pass that the Beggar  
died, and was carried by the Angels  
into Abraham's Bosom: the Rich Man  
also died, and was buried. And in  
Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Tor-  
ment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and  
Lazarus in his Bosom.*



**I**N my former Discourse Vol. I.  
from these Words, after I  
had briefly shew'd you the  
Design of this Parable, I  
took Occasion to insist on  
these Two Propositions:

**T**

1<sup>st</sup>: That



**VOL. I.** 1<sup>st</sup>: That Souls do not die with the Body, but survive it.

2<sup>dly</sup>: That Good Souls go to Happy Places, Evil Souls to Miserable ones; and then concluded with inferring what Influence these Considerations should have on the Government of our Lives.

Now whereas there is a plain Difference between the State of Departed Souls before the Resurrection, and the Last Judgment; and that of the Whole Man afterwards; I propose in this Discourse, to take farther Occasion from these Words to consider this Difference.

And here I am to inquire into these Two Things.

I. What we are to think of a particular Judgment.

II. The Degrees of Misery and Happiness before and after the Resurrection.

I. Whether there be a particular Judgment. I can't, I confess, see, that the Decision of this Question can be necessary to influence the Morals of the World; for since there is a Judgment to come, the Rewards whereof are unspeakable, and the Punishments intolerable,

Serm.

XIV:  


nable; and both immutable and Eternal; I can't see, that any Consideration can be of Force much to weaken this Argument; and much more since Good Souls go immediately to Happiness, and Evil ones into Misery. For what matter is it after what manner we come into this State after Death? All that concerns us to know, is how to avoid the one, and obtain the other. However, Man being prone to Infidelity, and consequently to Cavils and Objections, and some being apt to be wrought on one way, and some another, I do not think we ought to omit inquiring after any Truth which may either render Religion more uniform and intelligible, or add the least Force and Weight to the Motives of it. I proceed therefore to the Matter propos'd.

By a particular Judgment, I mean such a one wherein every particular Soul, as soon as it dislodges out of the Body, undergoes such a Tryal before the Tribunal of God, as the whole World will do at the Last Day, and has Sentence pass'd upon it according to its Works in the Body. I will not peremptorily affirm or deny this, but lay such Considerations before you as may best serve to enlighten you, and leave you

**VOL. I.** to judge for your selves; which I may  
 the more easily do, because I have al-  
 ready prov'd, that Good Souls go into  
 Happy Places, and Wicked Souls into  
 Miserable ones.

Now this Matter may receive Light  
 either from Reason, from Human Au-  
 thority, or from Divine. Let us ex-  
 amine each of these.

*First*, Reason may afford us these  
 Two Considerations.

I. That it is probable enough, that  
 as Guilt will make a wicked Soul, when  
 it goes out of the Body, shun Light  
 and God, and plunge it self into that  
 Darknes, in which the Evil Spirits are  
 reserv'd; so will a pious Soul shun De-  
 vils and Darknes, and naturally mount  
 up towards God and Light: The one  
 and the other will naturally resort to  
 that Company, that Conversation which  
 they delighted in when they were in  
 the Body. And as good Angels, which  
 minister to Holy Souls when in the  
 Body, will naturally resort and mini-  
 ster to 'em when they come out of it;  
 so those evil Spirits which tempted  
 and influenced Wicked Souls when in  
 the Body, will attend 'em coming out  
 of it, and possess and seize upon those  
 helpless, friendless, sinful Wretches;  
 and



and consequently we can't, by the force of Reason, infer a particular Judgment necessary; since good and ill Souls may, without this, be easily distinguished and separated into different Places. Serm. XIV.

2. When they are thus distinguished and separated, the Nature of each Place, and of the Conversation in it, and the different Passions which in these different States possess these different Souls, are enough abundantly, without any Judicial Sentence or Infliction, to make the one very Miserable, and the other very Happy. And this is another Proof, why we cannot, by the meer Light of Reason, resolve that there is a particular Judgment.

If, *Secondly*, we were to determine this Point by the Judgment of Man; I think there's no Doubt to be made, but that the greater part of *Authors*, both Ancient and Modern, make for a particular Judgment, and there are very few who have doubted or denied it: But then 'tis not easie to resolve, how far they all agree in their Notion of a particular Judgment, whether they all think the same thing of the Tribunal before which Souls are presented, of the Tryal and Examination they undergo, and of the Sentence pass'd and executed upon them; nay, 'tis certain they are

VOL. I. not of one Mind about these Things. Besides, the Authority of Man can't have any great Influence in Matters of Doctrine, any farther than it is supported by Reason or Scripture; therefore I will not enlarge upon this Topick.

This Matter then, *Thirdly*, can only receive farther Light from Scripture; and from hence, *First*, there are Two Arguments urg'd against it.

The 1<sup>st</sup> is this, That the Last Day is the Great Day of Judgment; and as those who are against a particular Judgment think, the only one taken notice of in Scripture. 'Tis certain, the Scripture does constantly set this before us, as the Time of our Examination and Tryal, as the Time of Reward and Punishment, as the Day of Retribution or Refreshing, as the Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of G O D. *Thou shalt be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just. Seeing it is a Righteous thing with God to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that Day.* There-

Acts iii.  
19.

Luke xiv.  
14.

2 Thess. i.  
6.

2 Tim. iv.  
8.

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Therefore judge nothing before the Time, Serm. XIV.  
 until the Lord come, who both will bring 1 Cor. iv, 5.  
 to light the hidden things of Darkness, 2 Cor. v. 10.  
 and will make manifest the Counsels of the  
 Heart: and then shall every Man have  
 Praiſe of God. For we muſt all appear  
 before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt; that  
 every one may receive the things done in  
 his Body, according to that he hath done,  
 whether it be good or bad. From hence  
 they thus argue; To what Purpoſe  
 a particular Judgment, when there's a  
 general one? How can this be called  
 the Day of Judgment, when there's an-  
 other? To what Purpoſe are the Actions  
 of Men examin'd again, which were  
 examin'd before? How can the Works  
 of Darkneſs and the Thoughts of Mens  
 Hearts be ſaid now to be reveal'd,  
 when they were laid open before?  
 To what End are they Sentenc'd again?  
 And how can this be called the Day of  
 Retribution, when 'tis but adjudging  
 Men to the ſame Places, to the ſame  
 Rewards and Punishments, which were  
 Judicially assign'd them before?

Now the common Answer which the  
 Patrons of a particular Judgment make  
 to this Objection, conſiſts in assigning ſe-  
 veral Reaſons for a general Judgment,  
 notwithstanding a particular one.

T 4

1<sup>ſ</sup>t: That



**VOL. I.** 1<sup>st</sup>: That the Righteousness of God may be made manifest. But it must be said, that to those who are already Judg'd, this is sufficiently done; nor can they themselves, Angels or Devils, be ignorant of this.

They say, 2<sup>dly</sup>, That this will be for the Glory of Christ; *We shall all stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ.* For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every Knee shall bow to me, and every Tongue shall confess to God.* So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God. To this twill be reply'd, That upon Supposition of a particular Judgment only, every Knee must bow to Christ, since every one will be condemn'd or acquitted by him.

3<sup>dly</sup> then, They pretend this to be necessary for the Publick Vindication and Glory of the Righteous, who have been here *made a Spectacle unto the World, and to Angels, and to Men.* But to this it may be said, as before, The particular Judgment will not be so privately pass'd, but that Angels and Devils must have abundant Notice of it.

It is alleag'd, 4<sup>thly</sup>, That the whole Man will be then Judg'd. But to this 'tis Answer'd, That 'tis the Soul that offends,

offends, or does well, the Body is but its Instrument; 'tis the Soul that is the Man, and 'tis this which is judg'd, whether in the Body, or out of the Body. Serm. XIV.

*Lastly*, They think the good or ill Works of Men are not at an end with their Lives; their Examples, their Writings, their Contrivances and Designs reach, it may be, to the End of the World; and therefore they must be Judg'd at last, when the Mischief or Merit of their Actions is compleat and at an End.

But this I own is no good Argument; for GOD knows how, well enough, to estimate the Malignity of a Sinner's Mind, and the Obliquity of his Action, without tarrying to see the utmost Consequence and Influence of both. And if this Argument could prove any thing, it would prove, that there were no particular Judgment.

Upon the whole, I have Two Things to say of this way of Answering to the Objection.

1. That if it were a proper Thing for us to judge what were fit for GOD to do, these and the like Reasons seem to prove a general Judgment most conducive to the Ends of GOD's Glory. But the Truth is, we are very incompetent Judges

**Voc. I.** Judges of what it is most fit for **G O D** to do; and in what Ways and Methods Infinite Wisdom shall most effectually promote its own Glorious Ends.

**2.** I can't think, that this way of Answering to the Objection is sufficient. It does indeed shew us why the Judgment should be publick, but it does not account for the Difficulties which a particular Judgment, in their Notion of it, implies, when join'd with a general one.

A 3<sup>d</sup> Objection against a particular Judgment, is this; If there shall be many at the Last Day of Judgment, who shall really expect to enter into Heaven, and yet shall be cast out; it seems plain that such as these have not undergone any particular Judgment; for how can it be possible, that after they have undergone a strict Tryal, they should be uncertain whether they be good or ill Men? How is it possible, that after they have been condemn'd by a Judicial Sentence of **G O D** in a particular Judgment, they should expect to be acquitted in a general one? How, finally, is it possible, that a Man should continue to the Day of Judgment, in groundless Hopes, and foolish Confidence and Presumption, if he did undergo a strict Examination and Tryal as soon as he



he dislodg'd out of the Body? This Sermon can never be, 'tis wholly unaccountable to common Sense. Now the Places that are urg'd, are, *Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work Iniquity. And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready, went in with him to the Marriage, and the Door was shut. Afterward came also the other Virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answer'd and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. When I saw thee an hungred, or athirst, or a Stranger, or naked, or sick, or in Prison, and did not minister unto thee? But to these Places I answer plainly:*

XIV.

Matt. vii.

22, 23,

Mar. xxv.

10, 11, 12,

Ver. 44.

1. That they are Parabolical, and are not to be urg'd strictly and literally, but only the Design of them to be enquir'd into; and that is plainly this, that nothing but doing the Will of God, nothing but true and solid Righteousness, will give us Admission into Heaven; and that when God tries and judges us for our Lives past, it will avail us little to plead any thing else, or to form any vain Pretences and Excuses.

2. That

Vol. I.

2. That our Saviour might the more effectually move and excite his Hearers to Holiness and Watchfulness, to Sincerity and Diligence, he does not only by this Doctrine already mention'd, cut off all vain and presumptuous Hopes, but he does also represent this Day of Judgment, as just at the Door, as if it would overtake that Generation; and consequently, they that heard him, were to apply this Discourse to themselves, who were then living, and on whom the Day of Judgment, as they conceiv'd, was suddenly to come. Now this being suppos'd, 'tis plain that Men were likely to meet Judgment, if they were not careful to examine and reform themselves, with the same Mistakes, and the same groundless Presumptions with which they too often do Death. That this is the direct Account of the Matter in these Texts, is very plain from the Application our Lord himself makes of this Parable of the Foolish Virgins, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.* So in the Account of the Day of Judgment, in this Chapter, our Saviour describes it in such Language, as would naturally lead his Hearers to this

Mat. xxv.

13.

this Sense, *i. e.* to think that the Nations then living were to be mainly concern'd in this Judgment. *And before him shall be gathered all Nations, &c.* And thus this Difficulty, which has seem'd to some Learned Men insuperable, is easily and naturally remov'd.

Serm.  
XIV.

Ver. 32.

Let us now then, in the second Place, examine what it is that can be offer'd on the other side, for a particular Judgment. I do confess, that I can't find any Texts in Scripture, that do expressly assert one; and in such a Notion of a particular Judgment as the Defenders of one have entertain'd, I doubt it is not to be collected from Scripture, by any clear Inference or Reasons; nor, as I think, can it ever be reconcil'd with a Judgment to come. I say, in such a Notion of it, as that, 1. The Tribun' of Christ should be placed. *For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son.* That, 2. Every Soul, as soon as it departs out of the Body, should be presented before him to be Judg'd. That, 3. All the Thoughts, Words and Actions of his Life should be scann'd and examin'd, as we are told they will in the Day of Judgment. And that, lastly, They should be adjudg'd by the same

John v.  
22.



Vol. I. same Sentence, *Come, ye Blessed*; or *Go, ye Cursed*, to the very same Rewards or Punishments which the Last Day will Decree: In this, I say, I can't agree with these Patrons of a particular Judgment. But a Preliminary, (and if I may so call it) a Preparatory Judgment, by which Good and Evil Souls shall be distinguish'd and discriminated from one another; and the evil ones shall be committed to an ill Place, as to a Prison, and bound over (if I may so speak) to the Last and Great Assize; and good ones conducted to the outward Courts of Heaven, where they expect, in Joy and Security, that Day of the Resurrection and Judgment, which shall compleat and consummate their Blessedness, and actually confer upon them the *Crown of Righteousness*: This sort of Judgment seems to me such as may be fully prov'd from Scripture; and is so far from being inconsistent with the Judgment to come, that it is naturally presuppos'd by it.

But now, this sort of Judgment differs widely from the particular Judgment before describ'd.

I do not suppose, i. the Tribunal of Christ erected, to exercise this Judgment; for that will not be plac'd till the Last Day;

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Day; but I suppose this is to be per- Serm.  
form'd by a peculiar Presence and XIV.  
Power of G o d, partly in the Con-  
fciences of Souls departed, and partly  
in the Angels of G o d deputed to this  
Office.

If it seems strange that I ascribe so great  
a Share in this Matter to the Force of Con-  
science, you will cease to wonder at it any  
longer, if you reflect, with me, a little on  
the Scripture. For, 1. You know well,  
that *the Spirit of G o d, even in this* Rom. viii.  
*Life, beareth witness with our Spirit,* 16.  
*that we are the Children of God.* How  
easy and natural is it then, to believe that  
G o d will render this Judgment of his  
Eternal Spirit brighter and stronger in  
the Soul, when out of the Body, and in  
another World? So, on the other hand,  
when the Day of Grace is set, 'tis easy  
to imagine how much that Conscience  
that now misbodes and condemns us,  
will be filled with greater and intolerable  
Despair, partly from G o d's abandoning  
it entirely; partly from a clear Mani-  
festation of his Displeasure and Wrath  
against it; and partly from its being  
possess'd and invaded by one or more  
Evil Spirits.

As

**VOL. I.** As to what Share I attribute to Angels in this particular Judgment, I am led to that also by the Scripture. I will not go about to infer any thing from their being called *Thrones, Dominions, and Principalities*, which would be in plain Terms but Guessing, and Amusement. To pass this by therefore, it is evident, that they are Spectators and Witnesses of our Actions in this Life; this, I think, is granted by all, to be the Doctrine of the Scripture, and therefore needs no Proof. Next, it is evident, that at the Day of Judgment, they will be empower'd and enabled to separate the Righteous from the Wicked. We have an Account of this, *Matt. xiii.* from the 38th to the 44th Verse; and again, *Matt. xxiv. 31.* and elsewhere. Now, why those Angels who shall be enabled and empower'd to separate good and ill Men, who shall be found alive at the Coming of our Lord, should be either unable or unfit to discharge the same Office, with respect to good and ill Souls, I can by no means see. But farther, Lastly, I do not ascribe this to any Natural Right or Capacity in Angels, but to a peculiar Power and Presence of God in them; and when I remember that the

*Discern-*



*Discerning of Spirits* was conferr'd upon the Apostles, to make them Spiritual Judges (if I may so speak) in the Church of Christ; I can't think I do strain Matters, when I suppose Angels in a far higher measure endowed with this Gift for this End.

Serm.  
XIV.

1 Cor. xii.  
10.

2. Another Difference between this and the particular Judgment, which obtains the general Opinion, is this; I do not think that all the Particulars of every Man's Life are at this time enquir'd into or prov'd, but only in general, they are judg'd either Criminal or Virtuous; their Life is so far only determin'd of, as that 'tis decided whether they be fit for Reward or Punishment in the Day of Judgment; but by no means what Degrees or Measures, either of the one or the other, will be then allotted them. This I think my self obliged to believe by those Places of Scripture which do expressly attribute to the Last Day, and to that alone, the bringing all things to Light; and because St. *Jude* tells us, that Evil Angels are reserv'd in everlasting Chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the Last Day.

Jude 6;

That such a sort of Judgment as this may be inferr'd from Scripture, and that

U

such

VOL. I. such a one is as much as can be infer'd from those Places us'd for a particular Judgment, is, I think, not difficult to be prov'd. For, 1. I have already prov'd, that good Souls go to good Places, and evil Souls to evil ones; that the one are happy, and the other miserable; all therefore that remains to be shew'd, is, that this Misery and Happiness is the Effect of a Judicial Proceeding; and if we consider the Scripture, we shall have no doubt of this; for concerning those *Rev. xiv. which die in the Lord*, 'tis said, that 13. *their Works do follow them*; and the same thing must be understood of the Wicked, that theirs follow them too. Now the Sense of this Phrase in Scripture, is, that with respect to and in consideration of their Works, Good or Evil is allotted them; and however this be contriv'd, however executed, since 'tis in Prosecution of that Law which they were under when in the Body, 'tis plain that it's an Act of Government, and of Judicial Administration.

Besides, it is said plainly of the *Rich* *-Ver. 25. Man and Lazarus*, a little after my Text, that the one was *comforted*, and the other *tormented*; and it is observable, that the Soul of *Lazarus* is not said to mount

mount up to Heaven by Virtue of that Serm. Love and Devotion which was in it, but XIV. that it *was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom.*

Consonant to this, is what is said in another Part of Scripture, that when *the Dust* (of our Bodies) *returns unto the Earth as it was, the Spirit shall return unto God that gave it;* which Words do seem plainly to import a Judicial Prefence of God, this being the only Sense in which all Souls in general can be said to *return to God*; Evil Souls do not return to him, in order to make their Abode with him, or enjoy him: And one may as well say, that the Text is to be understood of the Bodies only, as of the Souls only of the Good. The *Chaldee* Paraphrase does therefore tell us, that they *return to God*, to be judg'd by him; and that this was the general Opinion of the *Jews*, is plain from the Author of *Ecclesiasticus*, when he says, *'tis an easy thing unto the Lord, in the Day of Death, to reward a Man according to his Ways.* Ecclef. xii. 7.

Now, to these Places of Scripture we may add, that Reason will tell us, that tho' this can't be demonstrated, yet it is most probable. For, 1. When the Day of Grace is past, what is more natural,



Vol. I. than that the Day of Wrath, or the  
 Day of Reward, should commence?

2. When the Day of Probation is past, tho' an exact and ultimate Judgment may not immediately be set up, yet what is more natural and necessary than that a preparatory, previous and imperfect one should? But it is time I should now pass on to the

*Had* Thing propos'd, viz. The Degrees of Misery and Happiness before and after the Resurrection; and to shew, That the Good, in a State of Separation, are not yet as happy, nor the Wicked as miserable, as they will be after the Day of Judgment.

This seems to be plain: 1. From all those Texts of Scripture which mention that, as the Day of Reward and Punishment; and it is therefore in a peculiar manner made the Hope and Expectation of the Children of God. Then is the *Crown of Righteousness* conferr'd, then is our Redemption consummated, then are our Bodies rais'd up, and Death and Hell triumph'd over in the Glory of Christ, and of his Saints. This is constantly the Language of Scripture; and the least that can be imply'd by these Texts, must be, that the  
 Happy-

Happiness or Misery of Man, tho' in Serm. some degree and measure it commences XIV. now, yet does it not receive its Consummation and Accomplishment till that Day.

2. This is plain, from the Sentence of the Last Day, *Come, ye Blessed, &c.* seems to put them in Possession of something, whereof they were not possess'd before; and, *Go, ye Cursed,* seems to condemn them to something which they did not suffer before; or else this would not be any other than the Confirmation of the particular Judgment I have spoken of before, which is a Notion derogatory to the Glory and Dignity of the Last Day, and inconsistent with the Scriptures.

3. The State of Devils on this side the Day of Judgment, is a plain Proof of this Doctrine. *The Devils believe and tremble,* saith St. James. But why should they tremble at the Thoughts of the Day of Judgment, more than at any other Day, if it added nothing to their Evil or Misery? Why is that Day made a Matter of Belief, if nothing will befall them then but what they feel now? Why did they so much dread the being sent into the *Deep*, if that were not a more

Chap. ii.  
ver. 19.

Luk. vii.  
31.



Vol. I. painful and dismal Place than that they  
 are now in? Why do they, with Fear, de-  
 mand of Christ, *Art thou come to torment*  
*us before our time*, if their Torments were  
 even then as great as they will be after  
 the Day of Judgment? Why does  
 St. Jude say, that they *are reserv'd unto*  
*the Judgment of the Last Day*?

Mat. viii.  
 29.

4. I might argue from the different  
 Names which Scripture gives to the dif-  
 ferent Mansions which Souls departed,  
 and good and ill Men after the Day of  
 Judgment, make their Abode in. Thus  
 the Place of the Souls departed, is com-  
 monly called *Hades*; but that of the  
 Damned, *Gebenna*. The Place of good  
 Souls departed, is called *Paradise*, or  
*Abraham's Bosom*; but that of those who  
 are absolv'd, and crown'd at the Last Day,  
*the Kingdom of our Father*. This at  
 least supposes the States different in De-  
 grees of Happiness.

5. Reason will tell us, that good  
 Souls, after the Resurrection, must en-  
 joy more, as the *Schools* speak, both  
 extensively and intensively, *i. e.* with  
 respect to the Number and Nature of  
 their Objects, and the Pleasure of their  
 Enjoyment. 1. As to their Objects, no-  
 thing seems to be more plain, than that  
 Souls



Souls are made to inform and actuate Bodies; and if so, there must be some Natural Use which they are to make of them, and some Advantage which they are to reap from them; there must be many things which they can't do or enjoy without Bodies; or at least, not so well.

2. Their being advanc'd (as I suppose) to the more inward Apartments of Heaven, the *Sancta Sanctorum*, must import and imply the Enlargement of their Capacities, greater Vouchsafements on the side of God, new Discoveries, and new Manifestations. This may be easily inferr'd from that of St. *John*, *We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* To be fitted for a nearer Approach, we must be rais'd and prepar'd by more and more perfect and Divine Endowments; therefore the nearer we are to God, the more shall we partake of him, *i. e.* the greater Share shall we have of Happiness and Glory.

Serm.  
XIV.



1 Joh. iii.  
2.

*The End of the Fourteenth Sermon.*

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Souls are made to immortal and sensible  
Bodies, and if so, there must be some  
Natural Use which they are to apply to  
them, and some Advantages which they  
are to reap from them: these must be  
many things which they can't do or enjoy  
without Bodies; or at least, not so well.  
2. Their being advanced (as I suppose) to  
the more inward Apartments of Heaven,  
the higher Rank, rank, and more support, and  
more of the enlargement of their capacities  
(greater Vision, more of the spirit of  
God, new Discoveries, and new Manifestations,  
these may be easily understood from  
that of St. Paul, We shall then receive the  
body of glory, as it will be like him: for as  
he is, so shall we be. To be sure, for a  
newer Apartment, we must be raised and  
prepared by more and more perfect and  
Divine Light, and more of the near-  
ness we are to God, and more of his love and  
take of him, &c. the greater Share shall  
we have of Happiness and Glory.

1691 JY 5

The End of the Fourth and Last



## SERMON XV.

The Errors of the Church of Rome,  
relating to the State of Separate  
Souls; Examined and Confuted.

[The Third Sermon on this Text.]

LUKE xvi. 22, 23.

*And it came to pass that the Beggar  
died, and was carried by the Angels  
into Abraham's Bosom: the Rich Man  
also died, and was buried. And in  
Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Tor-  
ments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and  
Lazarus in his Bosom.*



HAVE already, from VOL. I,  
these Words, explain'd and  
confirm'd those Truths,  
which were of greatest Im-  
portance for Information of  
Faith, or Instruction of Manners: These,  
as



**VOL. I.** as they were the most important, so were they the most easie and obvious; there are other Questions which are occasionally started about this Matter, which are of greater Difficulty, and less Use.

For (which is worth our Observation) God Almighty has dispos'd and rank'd those Truths which are the Objects of our Spiritual Appetites, just as he has those Beings which are the Objects of Bodily ones. Fruit and Corn grow up out of the Earth, and without much Search even present themselves to us; Water bubbles up in open View, and runs in plentiful Streams upon the Surface of the Earth; and these are the great Supports of our Temporal Lives, the necessary Objects of our Natural Appetites; but Gems and Stones, falsely call'd Precious, Gold and Rich Metals, the Almighty has lockt up in secret Caverns of the Earth and Darkneſs, and remov'd far from our Sight and Search. Thus God hath plac'd his Truths; those Divine ones which are the true Support and Food of Rational Spirits, lie scatter'd, like *Manna*, on the Top and Surface of the Earth; but others of less Use, the Game of bold Pride, or wanton Fancy, rather than the necessary

cessary Food of Spiritual Life, of the Serm. Soul of Man, he has perplex'd with XV. Difficulties, and obscured with Night and Darknes scatter'd round about them.

Thus Solomon observes of the true Wisdom, that *she standeth in the top of High Places, by the way in the Places of the Paths. She crieth at the Gates, at the Entry of the City, at the Coming in at the Doors.* How contrary is this to that *Cabalistical* Wisdom, that's like a Serpent hid in its own Windings and Circles, which requires a tedious Search, and after all, doth but increase Vanity and Trouble? So that we may say, of all perplex'd *Polemical* Knowledge, that of Solomon, *Of making, or reading, many of this sort of Books, there is no end, and much Study of 'em is a Weariness of the Flesh*; and I may add, Vexation of the Spirit of good Men. In Conformity to this excellent Method of G O D, it behoves you to value and delight most in the easie and important Truths of the Gospel; and it behoves the Clergy to entertain you with *the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby*; rather than with those intricate Disputes that distract, or those curious Fancies that amuse the Minds of Men,

This

Prov. viii.

2, 3.

Eccles. xi;

12.

1 Pet. ii;

2.



**VOL. I.** This is the Reason that has made me always prefer those Truths, which as they were the most easie for me to speak of, so most useful for you to hear, and ever shun Disputes and Controversies, unless that the Necessity of the Occasion compell'd me to 'em. But now that I may not seem to decline 'em, out of Favour of an Error (a); and because there are some Things that will afford us Matter of useful Doctrine and Instruction, I'll briefly, and I hope fully enough, speak of the most material Errors which oppose those Truths which I have laid down in my former Sermons.

(a) Preach-  
ed in 83.

The Church of Rome reckons up Five distinct Places, as Receptacles for Souls departed: Heaven and Hell; the *Limbus Patrum*, where the Souls of Good Men dying, under the *Old Testament*, remain'd till our Saviour's Ascension; the *Limbus Infantum*, where the Souls of Infants were receiv'd, who died unbaptiz'd; and Purgatory. Of these we receive Two, Heaven and Hell; and if any Body will express the State of Souls before the Resurrection, which is a State of Imperfection, in respect to that after the Resurrection, by a Third Place, I think it not worth the while to contend about



about it; tho' I think the *Fathers* did Sermon mean no more than some Difference in XV. the Degrees of Happiness and Punishment.

As to the *Limbus Patrum*, it is a Question we are now very little concern'd in, and therefore I shall say little about that. It cannot be deny'd, but that many of the *Fathers* were of Opinion, that the Souls of the Faithful, under the *Old Testament* Dispensation, did not ascend into Heaven, till our Saviour's Resurrection. This *Vossius* saith, was *Primitiva receptaque Veterum, usque ad Patrum Sæculum Sententia*; the *Primitive and Receiv'd Opinion of all the Fathers, quite down to the very last Age*; and indeed heaps up a great many of very clear Testimonies. And yet if he could have seen *Usher's* Answer to the *Jesuit*, he might have had Reason to change his Opinion; for he again brings as many clear Proofs of the Opinion of the *Fathers* to the contrary. So that as to the Authority of the *Fathers*, it seems of no great Weight in this Place; and yet I'll make bold to say, That whatever Weight this has, it is against the Church of *Rome*: For the Place of the *Patriarchs* was, with them, a quite different

VOL. I. different State from that which the *Papists* call their *Limbus*; for this the *Papists* make a Prison, excluding them from present Pleasure in the Enjoyment of GOD; but the *Fathers* did, with the highest Reason, believe, that *the Bosom of Abraham*, was a Place of Happiness; and that the Souls of the Faithful in that Place did enjoy Blessedness, and the Gracious Presence of GOD; as appears from St. *Ambrose de bono Mortis*, St. *Cyprian*, and many others.

And of this Opinion, it is apparent, was *Zuinglius*, *Melancton*, *Peter Martyr*, and *Calvin* himself; and yet distant enough from Popery even in this Point.

As to the Authority of Scripture, tho' these Men seem to have weigh'd it, and after all, to have continu'd of the same Opinion. (which *Arminius* professes to be his Case) with the Leave of so great Men, I must say, I see nothing in it sufficient to countenance any such Opinion, as if the Souls of Good Men, under the *Old Testament*, were in a different State from those under the *New*.

There are many Places urg'd, but Two are the most material, and may be press'd with some Appearance; where-

Resp. ad  
10 Quæst.

whereas all the rest that I have seen, in *Serm. Bellarmine, Esthius, &c.* are only the *XV.* Exercises of Fancy. The first is that of *Hebrews*, Into the second went the High Priest alone, once every Year, *not* Chap. ix. without Blood; which he offer'd for ver. 7, 8. himself, and for the Errors of the People. The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the Way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first Tabernacle was yet standing. Now all that can be argued from hence is plainly this, that the First and Second Covenant did vastly differ in this, that the one was a Covenant, by which the Souls of Men could not be truly purg'd, and their Persons justify'd, as consisting, in that respect, only in Typical Rites, Gifts and Sacrifices, that could not make him that did the Service perfect. Ver. 9. This will appear to be the utmost of the Sense of this Place, to any one who shall read the foregoing Chapter; in which it will appear, that the Consideration of the Difference of the Legal and Evangelical Covenant, gave Occasion to this Chapter; and who shall likewise read the following Part of this Chapter, where 'tis expressly said, That this Difference consisted in this, that those Gifts and Sacrifices were themselves of no Value. What of all



**VOL. I.** all this? Will any one from hence conclude, that since, during *the standing of the first Tabernacle*, GOD'S Way of Redeeming the World, was express'd only by Figures and Typical Sacrifices, therefore no Body did partake of the Real Virtue of the true Sacrifice? This I am sure is repugnant to Scripture, and to the Sense of the *Catholick Church*.

The Second Place is that of St. Peter, *By which also he went and preach'd unto the Spirits in Prison*; which Place, I am not asham'd to confess, I do not understand; and all the *Commentators*, I can see, might with more Modesty, and less Disparagement, have said so too, than have given us such strange and unaccountable Interpretations, as all of them do. However, as it is generally easier to see, in a Difficulty, what is wrong, than to determine what is right; I can easily see this belongs not to *Limbus Patrum*; than which nothing can be more evident from the following Verse, *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the Long-suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, &c.* What, were the Souls of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Moses, David, and the Prophets*, Disobedient Spirits?

Spirits? What, shall our Saviour's Serm. Descent into Hell, be called now a *XV.* *Preaching* to them? He that establishes a *Limbus Patrum* from hence, must have violent Prejudice, and a most extravagant Fancy.

The Case of Infants, is a Case we are most concern'd in, it being one of the greatest Comforts of Parents, that their Departed Children, tho' dying unbaptiz'd, are gone into Bliss. Concerning this *Limbus Infantum*, I know not by what Arts the Church of *Rome* reconciles those different Opinions, which, I think, nay, am sure, have been held amongst them concerning the State of Infants dying Unbaptiz'd. It is plain that the Council of *Trent* doth teach, *Sess. 3.* That such are Damned, however the Opinions of the Learned amongst them have been different about this Point. *Catharinus*, *Albertus*, *Pighius*, and *Savonorola*, were of Opinion, That after the Day of Judgment, they would be Happy in a kind of Natural Happiness, and Earthly Paradise. *Aquinas* and a great many of the *School-Men* taught, That they were Condemn'd Eternally, but should suffer only *Pœnam damni, non sensus, neque externam, neque internam;*



**VOL. I.** *The Loss of Happiness, without undergoing any Actual Punishment, either External or Internal. Gregory Ariminensis, &c. Panam Damni & sensus eternam; That they should be as well Actually Tormented, as excluded from Heaven to all Eternity. Polmannus, Panam damni & sensus usque ad Judicium, tunc beatos futuros; That they should be Punish'd in both Respects till the Day of Judgment, and then be made Happy.*

So different are they, that you may easily discern they proceed upon no clear Grounds. *Protestants* are in general of Opinion, That they are Happy; even the Synod of *Dort* confess themselves to abhor the contrary Opinion, (who were far from having a slight Opinion of Original Sin) tho' *Episcopus* labours to fasten it as an Imputation: So that upon all hands amongst *Protestants*, this Opinion is condemn'd. I must confess, I think them to have had as noble Thoughts of *Moloch*, who sacrific'd their Children to him, as such Men have of *GOD*, who sacrifice 'em Eternally to his Justice.

The Arguments are very tedious on both Sides, as appears from *Forbesius*, C. 10. *Catharinus de Statu Infantum*, &c.

But



But I think all may be summ'd up thus; Serm. XV.  
 The Two main Arguments against 'em, are, Original Sin, and the Necessity of Baptism by Precept.

As to the 1<sup>st</sup>: It were injurious to the Blood of Christ, if we should not think it prevail'd as far for Justification, as *Adam's* Sin for Condemnation; therefore since this Crime was contracted without their Voluntary Concurrence, it is but reasonable to believe it should be in like-manner expiated.

As to the 2<sup>d</sup>; They who are not capable of a Precept, cannot be ty'd to the Necessity arising from it. And those Things that are Necessary, *Necessitate precepti, & non medii*; By reason of a positive Precept, and not the Nature of the Things themselves, bind only such as are capable, and can prejudice none other. Then, Our Saviour doth expressly say, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Mat. xix.  
 14.

Let us pass on now to consider what it is they have to alledge in favour of *Purgatory*. And here the great Difficulties they labour under in the Explication of it, may serve to convince us of the Uncertainty of it. *Purgatory*, they say, is a Prison, where the Souls of Men, departing defil'd with the

VOL. I. Stains of Sin not yet wash'd off, or loaded with the Debts of any Temporal Punishments not yet discharg'd, do abide, that they may be cleans'd from the one, and undergo the other.

As to the Place, the Opinions are very various, but so are ours concerning Heaven and Hell.

For the Persons who are to descend into it, *Bellarmino* tells us, the Catholick Faith is, they will be only such as depart defil'd with the Guilt of Venial Sins; but that the imperfect Righteousness of many should not leave greater Stains than Venial Sin, I cannot see. Therefore, in another Place, he seems to think they will be all those who have any Remainders of Uncleanness. And then, if no Man, whose Holiness is not perfect, can enter into Heaven; if the Remainders of Imperfection are no-way to be wip'd off, but by *Purgatory*, what will become of others?

The Pains of *Purgatory*, they teach, are, 1. *Pœna damni*, Loss of Happiness. 2. *Pœna Sensus*, Positive Torments, to be inflicted by Fire, and that a Corporeal Fire, and which shall affect the Souls. But whether Devils be the Instruments and

and Executioners of this Pain, *Bellarmino* Sermon. XV. professes himself ignorant; tho' this he tell us for certain, That those Pains do infinitely exceed the bitterest Pains of Human Life, and quotes that Place of *Aquinas*, where 'tis said, That the least Punishment of *Purgatory*, is sharper than the greatest upon Earth.

As to the Time of *Purgatory*, *Bellarmino* grants, That *Res est incertissima, & non nisi temere definiri potest*; It is a Thing of great Uncertainty, and can't be determin'd of without Presumption: but yet he goes so far as to reckon the Opinion of *Dominicus* a Saint, who allows but Ten Years, among other Heretical Doctrines, and is sure they continue there 200 Years; because it is the Custom of the Church to observe the Anniversary Masses for Souls which went into *Purgatory* above 200 Years ago.

If you will believe this Argument, which I perceive he rested upon, and so doth his Church, you may as well conclude they remain there till the Day of Judgment, unless remov'd by very powerful Suffrages of the Living. It were easie to turn this into Ridicule and Sport; but I do neither think this Place



Vol. I. fit for it, nor do I think any Man's Religion (how Superstitious soever he be) ought to be serv'd so.

I'll speak *First*, to the Grounds on which they found their *Purgatory*; and *Secondly*, to the Opinions of the *Fathers* concerning it.

The two Grounds of *Purgatory* are, 1<sup>st</sup>, The Necessity of being cleansed ere we enter into Heaven; 2<sup>dly</sup>, The Necessity of undergoing Temporal Punishments for Sin, though God doth remit Eternal ones.

And as to the 1<sup>st</sup>, I'll grant, That nothing Unclean can enter into Heaven; and that no Man living, how Holy soever, is utterly freed from all Stains, from all Filth; for there is in the most perfect Man, that which is called the *Formes Pecca*, *Original Corruption*. There are, or may be, the Remains of ill Habits, which are not so wholly rooted out, but that there are left behind some Propensions to the Vices we are accusom'd to; and lastly, the Stain of those Sins, which they call Venial, or Sins of Infirmary. Some Writers of the Church of *Rome* do here much glory, that the *Protestants* do not, or, as they think, cannot determine when these Defilements

ments are remov'd, or how far remov'd they must be, ere they can enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*. Serm. XV.

In this lies the Strefs of all Arguments as to the First Ground of a *Purgatory*. But pray, what tho' I could not tell when, must it needs follow, that it cannot be done at all, without so many Years *Purgatory* in Corporeal Flames? What, tho' I cannot tell how it is done, must it needs follow, that it must be done with Fire? Certainly I should conceive it highly more Rational to attribute to the Holy Spirit, whose Office Sanctification is, the perfecting that Work which he begins, rather than to invent strange Flames to do it. But how this is remov'd *Bellarmino* himself shall tell us. The *Fomes Peccati*, Original Corruption, that is remov'd in Death, saith he, which doth extinguish all Sensualities. And I am much of his Opinion; for this Original Corruption being the *φύσιμα σκάνος*, the infecting the Soul only by its Union to the Body, this must of course be remov'd in good Men, when the Body is extinguish'd, when the Union is dissolv'd: For the Remainders of evil Habits, because these reside in the Powers of the

X 4

Soul,

*De Purg.*  
*lib. 2. c. 9.*



**Vol. I.** Soul, and are not tied to the Organs of the Body, he seems at first indeed to be at a Loss which way these are dissolv'd; but I think I may boldly say, that even these imperfect Remainders of Sin depend in good Men upon their Union to the Body, the Soul being really averse to them; and accordingly he bethinks himself better afterwards, and determines that they are cleans'd by the first Act of the contrary Habit in a separate Soul. Is it not now strange, that he who could find a way how these Stains and Filth could be purg'd without Fire, and the Soul fitted for Heaven without a *Purgatory*, doth not yet find how the Stains of a Venial Sin could be wip'd off without Fire? Doth a Venial Sin, which they themselves contend may challenge the Pardon of God, *ex natura sui, of its own nature*, leave a greater Stain than that of Original Corruption, that thing which in their Opinion damns Infants eternally? Doth a Sin of Infirmary leave a greater Stain than a wilful Deliberate one, nay, than the Remainders of an Habit of Sin? And why may not one Act of the contrary Virtue wipe off the Stain of a Venial Sin in a separate Soul, as well as that of a Mortal one, or, which is more,



a Habit of Mortal ones? Or since the Sermon. very Essence of a Venial Sin consists in XV. this, that it is not perfectly voluntary, what need is there to imagine that it leaves any Stain at all in a separate Soul? So weak, you see, is this Ground.

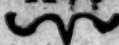
But they are driven to it; for if Original Corruption should stand in need of a *Purgatory*, then they foresaw that Infants dying immediately after Baptism, would be damned; for in these there remains Original Corruption, as the *For- Conc. Trid. sess. 5.* mes *Peccati*. But this was against the *Fathers*, and the Doctrine of their own Church too. If the Remainders of the Habit of Sin should have needed a *Purgatory*, then what would become of Men who should die immediately after Baptism, or of Martyrs? But that these should go into *Purgatory*, is against the Doctrine of their Church too: So that there was a Necessity of providing a *Purgatory* only for the Stains of Venial Sins: Which how senseless it is, you do by this time see. I might here farther shew you, if there were need, how unphilosophical this Conceit is, and how improper an Instrument Corporeal Fire is to cleanse the Soul from moral Stains.

But,

Vol. I. But, 2<sup>dly</sup>, They plead the Necessity of Sinners undergoing Temporal Punishments. This is, in plain *English*, an absurd Distinction, that makes God pardon the Sin, but punish the Sinner. It is injurious to the Mercy of God, while it makes him punish his Children in Flames, (none knowing when they will have an End) for Sins repented of, for Sins wash'd off by the Blood of Christ: Nay, it makes him Punish, out of pure Love of Punishing; for in *Purgatory* they own that they can't either *mereri* or *peccare*, either merit or sin any more. And it is most plainly injurious to the Blood of Christ, since it makes our own Punishment a proper, tho' but partial Expiation; for how can we imagine that God punishes a Sin in his Children, purely for the sake of a Sin past, without any respect to the bettering of him for the time to come? I say, this is purely and properly an Expiatory Suffering, for as much as it expiates. The Absurdity therefore of this Ground of *Purgatory* might be fully evinc'd, from insisting particularly on these several Propositions.

1. That Justice permits not to punish, properly, where the Guilt is pardon'd.

There-

Therefore, 2. in Scripture Phrase, *Serm.*  
for God to *remit Sin*, is to remit the Pu- *XV.*  
nishment due to it. 

3. The Manner of Christ's redeeming us by his Suffering doth clearly import our being freed from it.

4. The Effects of this Redemption, express'd by Reconciliation, are repugnant to this Reason of Purgatory.

5. That God Almighty will not be out-done in Mercy by his Creatures, and therefore hath commanded us to pray that he would *forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them which trespass against us.* But it must suffice to have named these, because I hasten, in the second place, to say a Word or two of the Opinions of the Fathers in this Point.

Now, tho' they speak very differently, and seem to think so; yet, as far as I understand 'em, 'tis a Difference of Words rather than Things. For in general they agree in these Two Points:

1. That the Happiness and Glory of the Souls of good Men departed, is not so perfect as it will be after the Resurrection.

2. That these Souls are sure of the Consummation of their Happiness, and do with Joy expect the Resurrection.

This



VOL. I. This State, some express by Paradise; some, by the Kingdom of Heaven; some, by *ANIMUS*, a Word they made use of only to signify the State of departed Souls in general: The greater part, especially if you will except *Origen*, and a few that follow'd him, do believe this State of Things to be Heaven itself. How far is this State from the Nature and Description of *Purgatory*, which you have heard of? therefore the Author of *Cath. Pacific. Romanus*, who seems to me to have been well read in the *Fathers*, doth deny that they believed a *Purgatorium Puritorium*. As to St. *Austin*, he has forsaken that Opinion, in his *Retractions*, and therefore he is of no Use to 'em. *Origen* seems to be the first Founder of a Purgatory; St. *Ambrose*, St. *Hilary*, St. *Jerom*, and *Ruffinus*, followed him; but their *Purgatory* was widely different from that which is the *Roman* one now.

1. In the Persons, for they exempted only Christ alone.
2. In the Time, which these Men believ'd should be only at the Last Day of Judgment, in which all should be cleans'd before they enter'd into Heaven.
3. They did never dream that these Pains could be abated by the Prayers or Oblations of the Living.

So that, as to this Point, the whole *Serm.* amounts to this: Before the Times of *XV.* *St. Augustin*, the *Roman Purgatory* was entirely unknown; and he, in his *Retractions*, doubts of what he seems to have spoken more confidently of elsewhere. *Pope Gregory* confirms it by *Visions* and *Apparitions*. 400 Years after, *John XVIII.* set apart a Day for Praying for the Souls in *Purgatory*; and 439 Years after, the Synod of *Florence* made it an Article of Faith, and the *Trent Council* confirm'd it.

*The End of the First Volume.*



So that as to this point, the whole seems  
 answers to this: Before the time of  
 St. Ignace, the Roman Pontiffs were  
 entirely unknown and he, in his  
 Bull, declares that he found to have  
 been in error concerning of elsewhere.  
 The Council of Trent by Victor and  
 Appollonius, 400 years after  
 XVI. It states a day for receiving  
 the same in 1545, and 400 years  
 after, the same of 1545 made it an  
 Article of Faith, and the First Council  
 confirmed it.

The End of the First Volume.





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